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TRINITARIAN SERMONS

PREACHED TO A

UNITARIAN CONGREGATION.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

ON THE UNITARIAN FAILURE

BY REV. WILLIAM L. GAGE.

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To

F. D. HUNTINGTON, D.D.,

ONCE MY BELOVED PASTOR,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

WHEN A DISBELIEVER IN CHRISTIANITY
I READ PERSUASIVE LECTURES OF ITS EVIDENCE
IN THE CONSISTENCY OF YOUR DAILY LIFE;

WHILE TO YOUR PUBLIC MINISTRATIONS
I OWE, UNDER GOD,
THAT WITH NEW ENERGY AND HOPE
I ENTER ON THE MASTER'S SERVICE.

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PREFACE.

If the following Sermons do good they will accomplish the author's wish. They were written and preached out of conscientious regard to the great work of the ministry of Christ; they are now published, that going to a larger congregation than they have yet had audience of, they may plainly and boldly proclaim what the author believes are those doctrines which, when denied or ignored, make the life of man barren and desolate, and which, when received with heart and mind, with a child's trust, and a man's thought, can transfigure the life, and give infinite depth and richness to the soul. They do not claim to be labored and elaborate; they are simple, though not neglected in the preparation; they do not claim a striking originality; what is new in

them is scanty doubtless when compared with what is old; they do not claim to be an authoritative exposition of theology, endorsed by orthodox men; Christ is their only sponsor; they merely claim to be the sincere words of a man who has long sought for vitalizing religious truth, tried to feed his soul on husks, till wearied and unsatisfied, he has reconsidered the whole ground of man's sinfulness, and a redemption through Christ, and found, in the words and symbols of the Scriptures, food which meets the cravings of mind and heart. They were preached in all love and faithful endeavor to a congregation, by some of whom they were received in the spirit in which the words were spoken, but by others of whom they were met with closed ears, defiant faces, and with no apparent comprehension of the affection which prompted the minister to speak, the nerve which it required to testify to the truth, and of the arguments and reason of the discourses themselves.

The author of the following sermons is not

schooled in the divinity of the Trinitarians; he has not, till within the past year, looked into their works with any feelings but prejudice, and the skilled theologian will, doubtless, miss familiar phrases, and the enunciation of many truths which, to him, are real and precious; but it is believed that the theology here presented, inasmuch as it was drawn from the Bible, and approved by the consciousness, will meet with general acceptance among all evangelical denominations. The standpoint is, man a sinner; a redemption needed from his sin; Christ the Redeemer; the Holy Spirit the motive power in the heart, purifying away the sin, and giving the impulse to all true living. Great prominence is given to the work of Christ in the redemptive agency of the gospel; human needs are fully stated, the reconciliation of God, the forgiving, and man, the alienated, is presented; and while the thought flows through the channels of doctrine, the aim ever in view, has been the moving of the heart and the changing of the life. The

sermon on the Incarnate Word was prompted by a sentence in a letter from Dr. Bushnell to the author; the remainder are the result of the silent study of the Scriptures. This is their recommendation; they have, they need no other.

W. L. G.

INTRODUCTION.

Prof. Park in his well-remembered Sermon on the Theology of the Intellect and of the Feelings, and Dr. Bushnell, in his Sermon on Atonement, have both given expression to the thought, and verified it to the moral consciousness, that where a great doctrine has ever been carrying power in its train, not exercising it fitfully, or for a brief period, as a delusion may, but holding a lasting and uniform sway over the thought and affections of men, there must be a great truth at the bottom of it, the source of the power, perhaps discolored in its expression and carrying along many foreign and hurtful things with it, but still, despite calumny, refutation, sneers, sweeping the Christian world onward with a deepening, widening tide. Where you find churches having vitality, there is a reason for it beyond the urging and goading of ministers; where you find churches stagnant, torpid, dying, there is a cause for that. Religion was a vivifying, quickening influence after Jesus left the world, and there is no reason why it should not continue to be such to-day. And such it indeed is in our times: and a vital, working church manifests the power of

the gospel; and a paralyzed church is the indication that the dove has deserted it and left it to die. Looking around us, we find the evangelical churches not what they should be indeed: for how few are the real Christians! but we see them manifesting a degree of activity, a spirit of union, an aggressive attitude against sin, a love for lost souls, which proclaims truth as their basis: we find the "liberal" churches showing laxity of life, sneering at rigid purity as if there were a danger of men's being fastidiously righteous, and as organizations, forceless, uninfluential, stationary, paying a little regard to the external comforts of the poor, but ridiculing the thought that what is first to be cared for is the naked and squalid souls of those who live in dark alleys and narrow streets. If we apply Christ's maxim, By their fruits ye shall know them, what shall we say of the impotency and torpor of the Unitarian body and the energy and power of the Evangelical church. In what shall we find the reason but in the absence of truth to the one, its presence to the other?

But Unitarians will answer, "Though our churches take up but few contributions, and have, as churches, so little efficiency, yet what daily displays of private benevolence we are making! what sympathy with schools, colleges, institutions of reform, we are as individuals manifesting." Yes, you are wealthy, and therefore able; and proud, and therefore willing to do all this. But why, I would ask, must the church of Christ, the fountain of all benefactions, become

scant and dry? Is not the church the mother of those things which indicate real piety? If she is, and your churches are so languid and torpid as your daily confession admits, and all the world has to observe is your Unitarianism, are your Unitarian churches, the source of your boasted benefactions?

We hear much in these days of "Progress" in Theology, and there are strong indications, if we may trust the language of many sciolists in divinity, that Paul is out of season now, and that Jesus added no *new* light and power to the world, and that for men who have come out from "old creeds and superstitions" into a "calm and rational" life, to "turn back to such husks as the Trinity, Faith, and the Atonement," is like choosing the dim and murky atmosphere of early day rather than the clear and pure sunlight. Then let us thank God that so many noble souls have been richly nourished on those dry husks, and out of the strength that they have given, have done good service to God and man. And strange, that so many who live on those more select and dainty viands which our "good but darkened forefathers" did not live to see, have not with any general uniformity, brought forth the fruits of self-sacrifice, the bearing of the cross and a spiritualized and regenerate heart. Nay, if we read or mark the lives of the real Christians who profess a distinctively "liberal" faith, shall we be slow to note that what in them are the fruits of the Spirit are borne on the same tree which bears the Christian graces in every division of the church,

namely: Faith, the Atonement or Reconciliation through a Divine Christ, and a Regeneration through God's Spirit: the last two of which are the power and the truth which we imply in one term when we pronounce the word Trinity. A man who says that conversion means "I make a good resolution and keep it," as it was defined to me not eighteen hours before writing these pages, may raise the feeble taunt of turning to husks, when men crave a conversion in which God has a little part to work: men who do not understand and never did, the historical significance and the *real* meaning of the Trinity, its significance at Nice, its true meaning to-day, may call it going back to recognize Jesus as divine and the Holy Spirit as God, acting upon the human heart and subjecting the human will, but such retrogression let us welcome.

There is a coarse and flippant way of flinging at the good and noble men from whose loins our fathers sprung, with which it is not becoming to have much to do. Our fathers had the power of religion, and therefore I will boldly say they had a measure of its truth: are our liberals, with all their progress, doing a better work for the triumph of holiness and the good of the race, than those venerable men, whom it is the fashion to scout or feebly patronize? Shade of Sir Thomas More, of Baxter, Robinson, Davenport, we will not ask you to rise in your majesty and rebuke the idle clatter of our day. For men will not to any long extent, be carried away by this exalting of mock progress.

Yet there is a real progress which we may gladly recognize. There is a slow triumphing of the spirit over the letter, and a gradual fading away of those sharply marked lines which used to bound Christians in their separate pale. God be thanked for this, for it is through his great diffusive spirit, that Christians of one denomination can reach out the fraternal hand and receive and give fellowship and sympathy to every one who is in Christ: for in him they are all one.

There is, too, — blind is he who does not see it, — a transfiguration of our fathers' faith which makes it, if not higher and better, at least better adapted to us, and to our times. We coolly assume that we are nearly ready now to receive a finished instead of a proximate system of theology, and really forget that we, who think that we are perfecting our fathers' faith, are only new fashioning it by the light of our age, — our own fabric to be scouted by the sciolists of a later day. Still we think we are getting hold of the *verities* of our faith now and losing what was only the bondage to expression. I doubt not that this is so. A clearer idea is doubtless held of the nature of Faith than has been held before; the economico-practical relations of the doctrine of the Trinity, have come in with Schleiermacher and Neander, and men war less about the eternal generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit. The modern statement of the doctrine of Atonement reaches minds of a philosophical cast, better perhaps than the ancient state-

ment of the same verity; while on those incidental subjects, which men press into such unseemly prominence, such as a plenary Inspiration, the nature of Evil, the broadness of the atonement as reaching even to infants and to heathen of a certain out-reaching faith, the obligation of the Sabbath, there are doubtless to be found in our best theological books, views which go beyond those of our fathers. But let us not on such secondary ground as this, go to ridiculing the eternal verities of their faith, because we may change the position of a few of their out-posts. To make it the great end of a denomination to show that hell is not a place of real flames, that infants are not damned, that the Chronicles are not so valuable as the Gospel, that the Devil is not a person, waging a personal conflict with God, is unworthy the energies of men who ought to be doing war with sin, and carrying the blessings of Christianity to hundreds of hearts who are now in danger of thinking that there is nothing at all in what produces such bitterness and raillery and disagreement.

That there are true Christians among the Unitarians it would be madness or wickedness to deny. They are Christians however, it seems to me, not by virtue of being Unitarians, but by virtue of being followers of Christ, and therefore impregnated with the life and spirit of the master. They must stand in danger of being misunderstood by the most of the Christian world, for the majority of men attending

Unitarian churches are neither of a true faith nor of an earnest Christian life. A man who stands with the Trinitarian Church, must by the acting of the same principle, be misunderstood too, for he will be judged, not by the Trinitarianism of the Council of Nice nor of Moses Stuart, nor Jacob Abbott, nor Neander, but of the Tritheism of a majority of the clergy and laity of the Christian Church. It is indeed sad that it is so; but so it is. Channing has made as untrue a statement of the real doctrine of the Trinity as the most ignorant Universalist could make; and yet his statement passes as standard with the two hundred and fifty Unitarian Churches. And on the other side, many an Orthodox minister is guilty of charging all Unitarians with the humanitarianism of Theodore Parker. Would that we were all fair and disposed to be generous in our judgments, seeking the eternal verities which often lie under a disordered expression, believing that there are few men claiming to know and follow Christ who mean to betray him; and that if we only knew each other's hearts better, we should love each other more.

Some one may ask me, why did you renounce the Unitarian name? I would not dwell on this as a personal matter, for it is only the principle of the thing which is valuable. But I will say that in the place where the following sermons were preached, there was a well-founded impression that Unitarianism was only Humanitarianism, and since none of those who made the charge ever darkened my church doors, I pre-

ferred not to bear any prejudged denominational name; to be heard in the light of my own convictions and not of the well-known sentiments of the gentleman who built the church and paid every dollar of the minister's salary. But this was not alone what moved me. If there were no need that I should individually stand aloof from the fellowship and sympathy of the great evangelical, Protestant Church, the Trinitarian body, no reason that I should continue a *Unitarian*, I did not wish to stand where I might be welcome to a place indeed, but where there was no reason that I should stand. And seeing the Unitarian body, in its organized relations, becoming feeble and inert, being a young man and desirous of hard work, I preferred to take such steps as would place me in such fellowship, that I might feel the influence of co-operation, and join with those who are trying with zeal to do good service in the cause of Christ.

Those who profess the Christian name, are ever to remember that their work is not to establish a sectarian position, nor to augment the fortunes of any body of Christians, but to spread abroad Christianity, that it shall meet and overcome the sins of the world. Far be it from us to glorify any name but the name of Christ and Christian; far be it from us to strive for any narrow sectarian triumphs, but only for the spread of the gospel. Far be it from us to waste our strength in inglorious controversy, or to refuse to drink at the fountains which others have tasted and found good.

Every country of Christendom has its own Orthodox faith, which is to be purified from within and not from without. The Catholic faith yields hardly an inch from year to year to the assaults of Protestantism: it yielded all it would in Luther's day; and since then nothing has been done by the aggressive assaults of all the intellect and faith of Protestantism. In France the Catholic is the Orthodox faith, and a score of Evangelical alliances may thunder at its gates in vain; but let a Protestant soul rise up within it, and be developed there, and he can open the doors as Luther did and let in the day. The Orthodox faith of England is its own church; and while Dissenters try in vain to remove its old superstitions by standing in antagonism against it, they accomplish little, but when a few able men, who have caught the mantle of the lamented Arnold, rise up within it, they accomplish much. America has its Orthodox Church; and when men would renovate it, and correct its errors, they appeal to it in vain for a hearing if they stand face to face against it; they must be within it; they must be a part of it; then they will do something; then they can be heard.

We may say, therefore, in all kindness, that Unitarians are untrue to themselves, and to the truth just expressed and to the hopes of their fathers if they do not proceed in the most prudent way. They can see, as they look into the Church of America, a vitality and an earnestness and devotion to the science of theology, worthy of their imitation and admira-

tion. They have ideas which they would be glad to diffuse, which in fact, they consider it their great mission to diffuse,—why keep them to themselves and try to be warmed by their starlight? They must confess many deficiencies: their newspapers are deficient in distinctive religious feeling; their literature is adapted to polished and cultivated readers; their Sunday School question books are vague and general, not searching the spirit of the children; their sermons are too neglectful of deep spiritual religion, and are not unfrequently mere delicacies of composition; their churches are for the wealthy, the titled, and the learned, instead of being for all, without being which a church becomes merely a sepulchre for souls. To give and take is their true policy, and to give because they are willing to take. To stand in a sisterly attitude is their true position, not in defiant hostility. They ought not to monopolize any choice gift. If they have any ideas which are simpler and truer than the age, let them freely impart and approach us in friendly mien, as though they had a message to tell which it would do the church good to hear.

Truth compels me to say that so long as men are drawn together by taking a hostile position and have to live on the provisions of their own fort; *i.e.* cultivate their own literature and make their own papers, and hear their own sermons, exclusively, they stand a chance of losing a great deal that is good, much of the fine fruit that grows all around them and

which would be gladly given to them or exchanged for their own peculiar food. While talking of liberality, they are in danger of becoming narrow; while talking of an all-embracing love, they are in danger of becoming sectional; while refusing to eat of the food which nourishes others and drinking of the waters which refresh others, they are in danger of going hungry and thirsty. A class of men, as for example, the nobility of an European State, which marries only within itself, soon becomes extinct, and so a body of Christians, which lives within itself, which does not draw the fresh blood from other bodies, becomes feeble and inert. If such a body claim to be the bearers of a purified Christianity to the world, its mission will be spurned, its claims rejected. And such have been among the errors of Unitarians.

For what, to ask without bitterness, are the relations of the Unitarian body to the great cause of Christianity, *liberal* Christianity, if the term has any needed meaning? At present, inwardly hostile, outwardly antagonistic, reading its own books, having its own newspapers, occupying an independent position, and almost always forgetting whereof it was born and what its founders intended it should accomplish. The Convention Sermon, yearly preached at Boston, anniversary week, is almost the only existing sign, that the Trinitarian Congregational Church and the Unitarian Congregational Church, are one and the same body. But in the eyes of the world

(which is not very discriminating), there is an American Unitarian Church and an American Trinitarian Church, and the two are openly opposed to each other. They stand related in a conscious antagonism. But such antagonism only begets antagonism; it neither persuades nor overpowers; it strengthens itself as a man would strengthen himself who should fight with an oak tree, he would get large muscles, firm sinews, great force of arm, and hardness of fist, but he would neither soften nor overthrow the tree. Theodore Parker has the largest congregation in Boston, and yet he has done more to draw together and give vitality and power to the adherents of the Christian religion than any other man in America. Could the extremists have prayed him out of life at the last great revival they would have lost their best friend. For there are in every city scores of men and women who cling to the faith of their fathers tenfold more tenaciously than they would have done had this Boston iconoclast not assaulted it; and yet he has plenty of followers at home. In this case, we have the instance of a man in a very conspicuous position, seemingly wielding a mighty influence to change the theology of this nation, who is, notwithstanding, doing the work of a thousand evangelical ministers in making strong and solid the Calvinism of the land. For there are a thousand, yes, five of them, who are urged by his bitter sarcasm and his ungenerous denouncements into a resolute activity which is well echoed in their thousands of churches.

If, then, Unitarians have any real needed work to do, let them give up the contracting of men's minds to any ism, even to the ism which terminates the Sesquipedalian Unitarianism, let them go forth with far-reaching sympathies; let them take any true or good thing which they may have and project it into the theology of the land; not standing daintily aloof from that theology, but identifying themselves with it, not resisting it, but striving to correct it; not making bitter and narrow that theology, but kindly and catholic. If the Unitarian body has nothing distinctively *its*, to do, let it *distinctively* die: but if it has, let it do its work in a way that common sense would dictate as having the chances of success. And then with God let it lie.

For myself, I have no doubt that the Unitarian body has fulfilled its mission, and so now I am content to see it, as a body, die, for why puzzle the world with the problem of its continuance on a distinct basis if its work is done, if the movement has ripened and dropped its fruit into the great Church. Editors, who have papers which they want to keep going, and pastors who want to keep their flocks together, and the men who get their bread from the coffers of an "Association," may try to keep the old tree alive; but there are some Unitarians who are feeling that their body has given all its *valuable* ideas to the CHURCH, and that now, in view of the odium attached to the Unitarian name, those ideas will more speedily be made popular than they can be when

those who would diffuse them stand without instead of within the body of the church. There are some who might see, and I believe do see, that the body called Unitarian, as it is, manifests by its torpor, its falling away in numbers and power, its want of union and effective organization, its proffered shelter to men of known laxness of faith in Christ and the Scriptures, its attacking exploded errors, as if they were not settled, and its bad name, which Unitarians are bound to account for, that its work is done, that the body bearing the Unitarian name is passing away. Its vaunted individualism is no longer its alone to boast: other divisions of the church display it in no small degree; and while I feel sure that the work of modifying the popular theology is absurdly exaggerated when it is ascribed to Unitarian influences, almost solely; I am yet willing to believe that the Unitarian Church has had its mission to do, has accomplished it, is displaying the weakness attendant on decay, and that now is the time when honest Christians, who have no sympathy with the unbelieving school of men, who are usurping the title of Unitarian unchallenged and unresisted, should throw off the Unitarian name, and strike hands with the great church of Christ.

The Unitarian movement was a protest against Tritheism; and in its deepest sense in this relation, it never went below the verbal expression of the doctrine of the Trinity; the real doctrine of the Trinity, cloaked as it was by the word person, Channing cer-

tainly did not understand. It was also a protest against a view of the Atonement, which represented God as turned away from the world, Jesus as loving the world, and by his death reconciling an offended God with his children; a protest also against the former method of interpreting Scripture; against certain material notions connected with death and punishment; against confounding belief with life. Of these we may say that the tritheism of the church, induced by the unfortunate word person, to designate the inherent relations of God to the world and his creatures, is slowly but surely giving place to the view of what Neander calls the economico-practical relations of the Trinity, and so the Trinity, formerly the name of a mystery, is becoming the expression in one word of the whole work of redemption; the doctrine of the Atonement, now discarded in its relations to God's mingled justice and mercy by Unitarians altogether, has a new statement which must commend itself to every man of humility, who receives God's grace as a gift, and not as a hired man's reward; the method of interpretation claimed by the earlier Unitarians is now largely conceded; the life is believed to be the test rather than an unfruitful assent to theological statement, while those minor points claimed by the first Unitarians of this country, are now granted in the standard works of orthodox men. All this is a good work; let the Unitarians take what of the credit they deserve.

Of the failure of the Unitarian movement it is un-

necessary to speak. It is patent, it is notorious, and no statement of mine regarding Unitarian deadness would give new light, nor much corroborate the correct impression which the Christian world entertains. Though the outside churches have but glimpses of their lifeless Sunday Schools, their churches, filled with half-day and fair-weather Christians, their total want of meetings for conference and prayer, the general lack of spirituality of their members, yet they see rightly what they see, and divine the source in but a partial conception of the truths of Christianity. A distinguished man has said, "if Unitarians cannot be reasoned out of their position, it does not follow that they may not be frozen out;" it is a true remark, and it will call forth a corroboration from every ingenuous Unitarian. Their frankness in exhibiting their signs of decay is commendable, and their story is so full and complete that I will not incur the charge of an apostate's harshness in dwelling on what is so well understood.

The Unitarian faith is not weak by reason of its Arminianism, as the vigor and strength of the Methodist Church is enough to prove; its weak point is its Deistical tendency. This trying to get to God without a true manifestation of him in the flesh is Deism, and Deism never has been either powerful or popular. Christ, to the Unitarians, holds a singular and unfruitful relation, and until he takes his place as the mediator, God will not be brought into working relations with the heart. It is in their view of Christ that

their radical weakness lies, and until they have surmounted that, the atonement will not have its power with them, and the Cross will be shorn of almost all its influence.

But in parting from the Unitarian body, we wish to do it in no spirit of bitterness or narrowness. The associations of many years will pleasantly linger with us, and we have as few grudges to remember as most can have. In this introduction we have spoken plainly, but we hope in no hateful asperity. We hope ever to be catholic in our fellowship, and to love those who love Christ, whatever be their denominational name. We hope still to be a liberal Christian, liberal in the best sense of the word. Our sympathies will ever be with that progressive party which looks to the future for new light, having a Christianity so flexile, so adaptive as to meet the wants of all times and all men. We fall into the great evangelical church, and there we hope to live and die, and trust to see it purified in its life and in its faith where it needs it. There we would work, for there we shall find co-operation and life.

SERMON I.

CHRIST THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD.

"The brightness of his glory and the express image of his person."—HEBREWS, 1: 3.

THE question "What think ye of Christ?" is always and will always be a solemn and momentous question. Careless and indifferent as some of us may be to it, yet it is only with the greatest hazard that we close our eyes to its weighty significance. Those enunciations of Christ, about the eternal future to which we are all hastening, those solemn appeals to the human soul to know its own worth, and to rise to a heaven of peace and joy and love, which is within its reach, are they the speculations of a man like ourselves, an uneducated Gallilean carpenter? nay, more: are they the theorizings and studies of one whom certain humanitarians claim as a man superior to his generation, and in morals and in the beautiful simplicity of his life, one of the foremost souls that ever were on earth? or are his words those of a gifted messenger, superangelic though he be by nature, with mind and soul wholly unique, whom, although next to God in the scale of the universe, we still persist in severing from God, and spend our logic and our force in trying to

prove created by the Father? or shall we go higher, and hear in his voice the undertone of God, and enter into the glories of that wonderful verse, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"?

It is proper, before I go on to unfold my conception of the nature of Christ, and to answer the question for myself, if not for you, "What think ye of Christ?" that I should touch upon what seem to be some of the deficiencies of the standard Unitarian view of Christ, that view which gives pre-eminence to the conception that Jesus was not man nor God, but a specially created being between both: a super-angelic being who knew no sin, and whose main purpose in coming to man was to disclose the law of love, to exhibit a perfect life, to lay down complete precepts of action, and, lastly, and in the opinion of some, chiefly, to reveal tidings of those things which the wisest of men guessed at, but could not certainly say, such as the resurrection and the future life.

Now, to me, this view has certain great deficiencies, and the first of them is, that it is not grounded on the whole nature of man. It is true we want those tidings which Jesus brings of the resurrection and the future life, want them most pressingly; true, we also want a perfect law of action laid down before us to rectify the variations and deviations of our own fallible consciences, as the mariner must rectify his wavering needle by the position of the eternal stars. But we want more than this: we want, in the first place, that Jesus shall breathe God into the world,

not only by his words, but by his whole life: the words may give some idea of God, but it is Jesus' life, all his deeds and all the subtle manifestations of his spirit which reveal God most clearly and most fully. In the second place we want a Jesus whom we can love: and there does not appear in us aught that dwells with love and emotion on the Jesus who is neither God nor man, but a being so abnormal that we only wonder at him, and try to guess what he is in nature and in essence. Were he man we might, and doubtless should, love him; were he God in man, we should doubtless be drawn to him, first with wonder, and then with love, as the attributes of God were successively unfolded in his life; and though Christ, we should be brought to know and love God. But there is nothing in the Jesus of the Arians which can win love; who and what he can be in his interior nature, this Jesus who brings the glad tidings, remains an inscrutable mystery. It makes Jesus a dark and chilling enigma, instead of the warm and vivifying power of God. And when we read the life, or see the living, of a Christian of the Unitarian name, the goodness seems to be the fruit of a better doctrine than the name honestly covers: to be the honest legality of the humanitarian, or the Truth of the Incarnation, arraying itself in a false garb of words, but insensibly carrying and putting forth, though in such disadvantage, its inherent power.

It is the doctrine that seems to me to conform alike to the statements of Scripture, and to the facts of his-

tory and to the needs of the case, that Jesus Christ was God manifested in the flesh, God embodied, God pictured in a human face, spoken out in a human voice, acted out in a man's life, mirrored in a human existence: in one word, God represented to man, or, as at first stated, God manifested in the flesh. He who made the world, who breathed into man the breath of life, might have ever remained as invisible as the cherishing warmth of the sun that last spring awoke the seeds to germination. Forever might he have kept the planets revolving, the tides coming and going in majesty and power, generations of men and beasts rising in life and falling in death before him, and yet he be all unseen. He might have gone beyond this. He might have contented himself with the faint suggestion of his attributes in all the phases of nature, and in all the manifold parts of creation, shadowing, but only dimly, his love in the warm sunlight, his inscrutable Providence in the thunderstorms, his power in the ocean surges, his compassion in the recuperative energies of our physical system, his wisdom in the orderly play of the seasons, and in all the adaptations around us, of man to woman, of woman to man, of children to parents, of parents to children; his unity in the singleness of design, which characterizes the universe; his fatherhood in the provisions made for our birth, our nurture, and all our subsequent care; and, yet, not making himself fully known to us in any one or all of these ways, but only faintly and uncertainly sketching himself in

these cloud-pictures which surround us. But more than this he has done. The veil has been raised, and from it has stepped forth upon this solid earth of ours, One who brought God and heaven close to man.

> Du, den wir suchen auf so finstern Wegen,
> Mit forschenden Gedanken nicht erfassen.
> Du hast dein heilig Dunkel einst verlassen
> Und tratest sichtbar deinem Volk entgegen.

From the unpeopled void has come, not inarticulate whisperings, but the Word, as John calls it in his opening verses, the Word, the voice of the living God. No longer are we obliged to think of God as an abstraction so vast that we cannot begin to comprehend him, so shadowy that we cannot hope to see him. No longer is our faith to remain cold and languid because the unseen God has not given tokens of his visible presence. Let me still further explain.

Some belief in a Supreme Being is planted at the very bottom of our nature. No nation is found that does not exhibit more or less plain traces of such a belief. No man in his right mind lives, in whose heart there is not some germ of worship. This instinctive tendency has been forever showing itself, and a full page in the history of all nations has been given to the institutions of religion. The idea of God has existed with the utmost range of distinctness and indistinctness, In peoples like the degraded aborigines of Terra del Fuego, it has taken careful search, and prolonged inquiry to find it; in refined and enlight-

ened people like those of Judea, it is the foremost thing in the national life.

My next observation is this, that the wisest and best of nations in the world, have had some conception, more or less distinct, of a spiritual God, inhabiting the Universe, imponderable and shapeless. But in every case, in connection with this noble primitive conception, has come, as a co-ordinate necessity, the representing of this Spiritual Power of the air in a form palpable to the senses. However pure may have been the conception of a God, it seems in every case to have been overgrown by the necessity of fixing him in the thoughts by the aid of an image. So the ancient Persians transferred their original allegiance to an unseen God, to the Sun, the Parsees to fire, the Egyptians to a bird, the Indians of our forests to their medicine man, the Greeks and Romans to their Jupiter, whose splendid figure and strong limbs and silvery locks, and noble forehead, united in the highest type of a human being. The ancient Jews struggled the most fiercely of all known nations against giving up the worship of an unseen God, against imaging Him under any guise and in any way. Like men writhing with passion, so they wrestled with the desire of representing the Supreme by images. Their course from Moses down, in this regard, was as tortuous as the line of a ship at sea. The surrounding nations gave them no help, but rather the influences that controlled them were all in favor of image worship. Their history is most pitiable, but it

is conclusive, and it is of this that it *is* conclusive, that a nation *must* have some image, manifestation, or representation of God.

It is then a necessity of our nature, not only that we believe in God, but that to have a correct belief, a picture of him, shadowing him in a way apparent to our senses, be given to us. It is just this, nothing more, nothing less, that has been done by Christ. As to so many nations the sun, fire, idols, and the figures of beautiful men have embodied the sentiment of worship, so in our religion, have the attributes of God, been bodied forth in Christ. How wise such a provision is, those of us know who have tried to commune habitually with the God of nature, and have found our thoughts, hopes, aspirations, prayers, running out into empty universe, with no answering tone nor look nor touch as that which comes back from that dear God who reveals himself in Christ. Christ, it seems to me, came to stand before men then and there, when and where he lived and always and everywhere as the portrait of the Father, or in the language of my text, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." In Jesus Christ I see the man, hungry, weary, and footsore, and the God, using earthly appliances but as a footstool for his greatness. Into the brain and heart of Jesus of Nazareth came the spirit of God; and this, not in any loose or figurative sense, not in any vulgar arithmetical sense as of the third part of Deity incarnatized, but in a true, fixed, and clear sense of God coming

within the range of mortal sense and sympathy, and moral understanding, by the expressing of Himself in the Human form: Christ represents that faculty in the Divine Nature by which God is expressed to the cognizance of human souls. Jesus the man was the Temple where the Holy Spirit of God made his special seat, and though men might deny then and do deny now that God who is everywhere, can exist in one place rather than in another, and so cannot more exist in the body of Jesus than of James, yet they do *not* deny that the all-pervading light, the free sunshine of this room can be concentrated on a focus that shall burn your hand. In Christ there is a like concentration of the all-pervading spirit of God.

There is a fine passage in Bayne's Christian Life, which expresses well the source of piety in Dr. Arnold, and traces it to this conception of God revealed in Christ. Arnold himself thus opens the passage.

"For my own part, considering one great object of God's revealing himself in the person of Christ, to be the furnishing us with an object of worship which we could at once love and understand; or, in other words, the supplying safely and wholesomely that want in human nature which has shown itself in false religions, in making gods after our devices, it does seem to me to be forfeiting the peculiar benefits thus offered, if we persist in attempting to approach to God in his own incomprehensible essence, which, as no man hath seen or can see, so no man can conceive

it." Bayne continues, in his comments on Arnold, "this passage, is a virtual appeal to the testimony of history, that deism has ever failed to take a real hold of the mass of mankind; that when strenuously pressed its deity has become a confessed inconceivability. Arnold, by his reviving love of the Saviour, and the satisfaction which he declared he experienced in the worship of Him, testified that the Desired of the nations had come; through Jesus he could commune with God; holding by the hand of Jesus, he could stand unconsumed, as it were, in the very blaze of his throne; and," continues Bayne, "instead of seeking in his words an argument in support of Unitarian views, we find in them one more proof that there is between poor man, lying in troubled slumber between the world desert and his God, the precipice of an unscaled infinitude, if no ladder is let down, if no divine Saviour is come. The end of all his doubt was, to use his own form of expression, his placing himself conspicuously under the banner of the Lord Jesus, his cleaving to him, his reposing absolute trust in him, his resolving to become his faithful soldier and servant to life's end. His religion went on deepening from year to year; he drew closer and closer to God, and to his friend and Saviour, Jesus, and more and more the fruits of the Spirit beamed forth in thought, feeling, and action."

Bayne closes the passage thus: "We noted that his heart had yearned after one in the image of God, and yet in the image of man, whom he could wor-

ship; we found in that yearning the expression of a want common to humanity, and an argument against Unitarianism; and now, when we find the yearning satisfied, we bid every Unitarian say, whether this blessed influence that hallows his whole life is a delusion, and whether such warm and living emotions could flow from the sole and irrealizable conception of the Infinite, the Absolute, the One." *.

Thus we have in Christ a rich and full and ennobling view of God; Divinity revealed in the face, words, bearing, deeds, and whole deportment of the man, Jesus; God coming into a human soul with immeasurable fulness; God, concentring himself, like the rays of light at a focus, in Jesus, a man of Nazareth, an unlettered carpenter, and making him Jesus Christ, Jesus the Annointed, God made manifest in the flesh, and so clearly revealing himself in the human form, and in such lovely guise, so well known, so pictured in the life of Jesus that we can approach him with love, sympathy, trust. When God is made known to us, only in the forms of the material world, he does not win our human love, he gains our admiration and our awe; we veil our faces before him, and almost fear to pray to him; we know him only by words of loftiest dignity, Creator, Governor of worlds, Arbiter of destinies, but when in one like us, he is embodied, when, in Jesus, we see him mir-

* On account of the unacceptable character of long extracts, to a mixed congregation, most of the above quotations were omitted in the delivery.

rored, when he is God made manifest in the flesh, we are drawn to Him with love, affection, sympathy. When God appears in Christ, in his life, and on his cross, he reconciles the world to himself, he wins their love, confidence, and devotion; to God, as manifested in Christ, it is hard to entertain other than a distinct and felt affection. And, my friends, if you have known the new birth, if your religion has become a real thing to you, which you love and cherish, you love God, because you have first learned to love Christ; and through your affection, your sympathy towards Jesus, you have been brought to love and rely on God. You cannot love God without loving Christ; and through Christ is the way through which you pass easily to the Father. Thus is displayed his Mediatorial office, and seen from this point his mission of Mediator becomes important almost beyond expression.

There is scarcely any one here who has not heard more or less of theological contest held over the opening of John's gospel. "In the beginning," John states with majestic brevity, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now, without entering at all upon that battle field, it is enough to know that the first meaning of the term, translated Word, is word, and if in Word we find a solution of the difficulty, we are bound not to go to far-fetched meanings. Taking it then as certain, the Greek *logos* means Word, and then reverently and carefully reading it in the first

chapter of John, the thought breaks upon the mind that Christ as the Word is God *in his speaking aspect.* The world has long waited to hear what the Platos and the Zoroasters, who were listening to the whisperings of the universe, should report as certain, but they have brought little to common ears. Socrates cannot announce the doctrine of immortality without honestly saying, "So that it seems altogether probable that the good will live after death." But here is the Word, the voice of the speaking God, no longer dim, unintelligible whisperings, but the strong, earnest tones of one who knew that, although himself the Son, yet the Father dwelt in him.

From this manifestation of the Word or the voice of God in Christ, I might pass to other attributes of the Father, as displayed in the Son. Take the *love* of Jesus, so abounding, so all-embracing, not a man's love, but the very symbol of *the great* attribute of God, which is love. Take the long suffering of Jesus, that of no merely historical character begins to equal it; the very copy of the long suffering of compassionate Father, in Heaven; take his power, surely not the power of a man, but the best representation of that Power which is above us, and rules the sea, and controls the storm; take the wisdom of Jesus, the very picture of that wondrous Wisdom that knows the end from the beginning in every thing. In like manner we might take other attributes of God, such as justice, truth, purity, and order, and recall to your memory how they were all manifested in Jesus

with unparalleled fulness, all with miraculous perfection; all so high, so complete, that we have to ask, who should attain to those sublime heights of love, forbearance, power, wisdom, truth, justice, purity, order? Who indeed should it be but God made manifest in the flesh.

There are and always will be mysteries connected with the whole nature of Christ; but to my mind, the story of his temptation, of his dejection, of his sorrows, of his death, tells me of him in his human aspect: the unprecedented and unrivaled height to which the attributes of God himself were carried in him, shows the existence of a Divine element in him; while that emphatic beginning of John's gospel, such weighty words as these, "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," "Before Abraham was, I am." "I am in the Father and the Father in me; I and my Father are one; God was manifest in the flesh; the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person," proclaim that that Divine element was the very Holy Spirit of God.

The doctrine of Christ's nature which I would bring out, is then in a few words, *this:* that an unmeasured part of God, the Divine One, concentred itself like rays of light at a focus, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; that this was done that men should no longer dimly know God as an invisible abstraction as they did before Christ came, but could see his attributes pictured forth in the face, words, and bearing of a man, and that through sympathy with

Christ Jesus, they might be drawn to know and love and be in sympathy with the unseen Father; that the life enacted on the plains and hills of Judea, should be an epitome of the Divine life. And the grand issue of all his mission is, that we, through Christ, may again be conformed to the image of our heavenly Father; the restoration of man, the sinner to the likeness of God, the eternally pure.

Brethren, let us be truly thankful for this doctrine; grateful that God is no abstraction to us, but that the mirror has been held up to God and the glorious reflection caught for our knowledge and delight. With Jesus, the portraiture of the Father, we may be led to an intimate knowledge of both. And while we go on studying together of Jesus and the great lessons of his life and death, may they have their great power over us because they typify the intense and yearning love of God. Thus while we are singing of Jesus, meditating on him, living like him, believing in him, we are merely going through a portal which we *can* see to the interior of a temple which we cannot now see in its whole glory, and that is the all-pervading love of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON II.

THE INCARNATE WORD.

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."—JOHN, 14 : 10.

MY object at this time is to discuss certain questions touching the relations of Jesus Christ.

If you carefully read the Gospel of John, you will be surprised at the seeming contradictions which abound, and which, in a less degree, are scattered through the New Testament. The most striking one which occurs to my memory is that existing between the passages, "My Father is greater than I," and "I and my Father are one." One set of passages plainly implies that Jesus was a limited being, — limited in power, limited in wisdom: and then another great number of passages does not hesitate to couple his name with that of God himself. I would take as types of the former class such as this, "I can of myself do nothing;" "To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give;" — of the latter, such as this: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world

unto himself;" "All power is given unto me, in heaven and on earth;" "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Again take the seeming contradictions which assert his *coming* and his *being sent.* On the one side you have these words: "I came forth from the Father;" "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God;"—on the other side, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;" "Neither came I of myself, but he sent me." And then, lastly, with regard to prayer: he asserts that men can come to the Father and pray in his name, and the Holy Spirit shall be given to all who ask; and yet follow the same Jesus into Gethsemane, and you find *him* in the posture of prayer, and hear the words, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Seeming contradictions like these might well account for controversies in the Church; but it is a most happy thing that there is one view in which we can behold Jesus Christ, and see all these apparent inconsistencies of expression vanish in a purer light. I remember that once, while in the Dresden Gallery, I sought for a celebrated picture of Titian. I soon found it, but it did not seem to equal those of artists of far less note. I looked at it from many points of view, and so did the friends who were with me; but it seemed a livid picture, rather a face in death than animated by the flush of life. But as we were about leaving it, one of my companions, glancing back from the opening door, exclaimed, "See!"

and we turned, and now the picture disclosed its secret charm, and we saw in it Titian's master hand. So, as we are almost turning from Jesus, filled with doubts at the phrases which seem so inconsistent, we turn and see him in a true light, the riddle is solved, and we find the key to the opening of John's Gospel.

The alembic in which we will assay all these seemingly contradictory passages of Scripture, and sublimate their unity of meaning, shall be the necessity laid upon Jesus Christ to keep his human and divine natures distinct in the comprehension of his followers. There stood the man Jesus before men, — to all outward seeming, a man like others; and there were words from his mouth, and deeds from his hand, which plainly indicated the divine in his composition. It was for him to guard them from image-worship, from falling down in adoration before his outward form, for those were the days, as you all know, when the world was corrupted to the extent of paying religious rites to the person of a man; and yet it was also for Jesus to plainly indicate that his body was the chosen temple for God in a special manner to inhabit. To keep the true poise between both of these indications, Jesus ever scrupulously shaped his words; now keeping the human side open before them, letting them only see the man and forget the God, know the Jesus and overlook the Christ, and thus guarding them from making a superstition of his person; and then again he had to keep the man out of view, make them forget the human shape, and only think of the

Father who dwelt in him. When he desired to inculcate a special duty, like that of prayer, then he placed himself before his disciples in his purely human aspect, and prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done;" when he wanted to show his direct connection with God, and manifest a certain divine power, he throws off the garb of submission, drops the human element, exhibits his kinship to God as he says, "Thinkest thou that I shall not be able to pray to the Father, and he shall presently send me twelve legions of angels?" and at another time he throws off even this, and in his near disciple's presence asserts his identity with God, and banishes all thought of the man Jesus as he says, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Sometimes, in order to keep his human side distinctly before his followers, he adopts a significant title in speaking of himself, — the Son of Man; sometimes, in order to bring the divine into relief, he adopts another title equally significant, — the Son of God.

I do not touch upon the question, whether Jesus who had a human body, had also a human soul; we are only thinking of that prominence which the sight of a man talking with us gives to him in his human aspect; and were Jesus to stand before us to-day, whenever he spake the word "I" or "me," we should think of the man Jesus before us. I say it was very often necessary for his followers to regard him in that human point of view, lest they should make a superstition of his person; and then it was at other times

an equal necessity that he should call to their thought that he whom they *saw* had been *sent* to fulfil the commands of an invisible Father, — that he whom they *saw* could, in his own strength, do nothing out of the course of common human ability; and this aspect finds its fullest expression in the well-known stumbling-block, "But of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man, neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father." There are few passages in the Bible which present greater difficulty than this. There are two solutions of it in common acceptance; but neither one seems to me to clear it. One is, that these words were spoken on one of those critical occasions when the human soul of Jesus encroached upon and obscured for a time his divine nature; the other is, that Jesus was not to such an extent a partaker in the divine nature as to be able to predict the event in question. Neither of these views seems consistent with what we know of Christ; and it seems to me, and the idea is not original with me, that it comes under the same general category of passages wherein Jesus wishes to display his manhood in the foreground, and keep his divinity out of sight; in other words, he speaks then in his capacity of *son;* and thus his words are just as true as in the passage, "I can of myself do nothing." We are to infer that the Christ, the divine in Jesus, was able to foretell the event in question, but that Jesus the man, wishing to keep his manhood then distinctly in sight, used the word "Son" with precisely the significance with

which he utters the pronoun "I" in the sentence, "I can of myself do nothing."

In like manner cast all the hard passages and all the contradictory passages into this alembic, and you shall find that where you discover great stress laid on Jesus' being *sent* by the father, or his subject, derived, created, and dependent state, he is wishing to keep the man Jesus in distinct view, lest they make a superstition of his person; and that in those passages which speak of him as one with the Father, as uncreated, independent, and supreme, he is displaying to mortal view the Deity which dwelt in his human body.

This position, which I think you will value the more the more you consider it, brings us to this second ground, that God is God, by whatever name known, and wherever found. Let us, if we accept this, honestly meet it. God is God when we meet him as displayed in every token of his handiwork; and since we believe the Bible, let us not shrink from the words, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." I see not how we may avoid this confession. It surely is not avoided by saying the Spirit of God; for since God is a spirit, the Spirit of God is God. And so it is, and must be, a vitally religious truth, that God, truly God, was in Christ; for God is God wherever you find him. I accept this truth: to me it is one of the most precious truths of the Bible. Since, then, I accept this thing, the name Christ is to me synonymous with that of God, and

the very name Jesus Christ is an epitome of that being's double nature, man and God, human and divine.* When I speak of Jesus, I speak of the man; when of Christ, I mean the God. Any thing short of this, if I believe the Gospels, I do not understand. How I can call him a divine being, and yet assert that what made him divine was not the Deity dwelling in him, surpasses my comprehension. It is distinctly affirmed by an eminent writer, whose words are so much to the point that I will quote them. "We believe," he says, "in the divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with Divine authority, and was a bright image of the Divine perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him the spirit without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression, and representative of God to mankind, so that through seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible father; so that when Christ came, God visited the world and dwelt with men more conspicuously than at any former period. In Christ's words

* The distinctions made in this passage are for the purpose of expression, rather than as the statement of a literal truth. It is a verbal convenience, *founded* on truth, and conveying it by implication. Jesus was the name of him whom men looked upon; his title was Christ, or Anointed; and while this term is not in itself a synonyme of God, yet it implies *with what* he was anointed, and thus may be used as a fit as well as convenient expression of the divine element of our Lord.

we hear God speaking; in his miracles we behold God acting; in his character and life we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love."

Now, my friends, if we accept these words of Channing, we must march straight to the conclusion that the deity of Christ and the divinity of Christ mean the same thing. Since God is God, wherever found, if he is in Christ, shall we shun the word, the Deity of Christ? I confess I do not see how we honestly can.

Again, my friends, if God was in Christ, as Jesus affirms, and the Apostles also, Christ as Christ, that is, as God, embraced all the attributes of God; not only those of love, forbearance, justice, order and purity, but those of higher name and more exalted nature, such as self-existence, omnipotence, and omniscience. This seems an inevitable conclusion from the premises, that God is God, wherever found, and since the Scriptures affirm that God was in Christ without measure, and that is a most significant clause, involving an illimitable part of Deity, that these attributes are to be predicated of the God in Christ.

Let us now look at these three attributes which, if Christ be divine, that is, God, he has of course, by virtue of his divine or deific nature. That Christ must have possessed them, if the spirit of God — *i.e.*, God — was given to him without measure, does not seem to admit of a question; that is, Christ as Christ must not only have had in his interior nature all purity, goodness, order, forbearance, and justice, but

self-existence, omnipotence, and omniscience. It is a work of supererogation to prove that Christ must have had those attributes. I may assume that a man who will honestly meet the verse, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself," will not hesitate to meet that word "God" without endeavoring to rob it of its own sacred glory. Let us, then, look at various representations of the three attributes of Christ, self-existence, omnipotence, and omniscience, by the light of the remarks which occupied the first pages of this sermon.

And first, of the self-existence of God in Christ. The positive view is expressed in these verses: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "Before Abraham was, I am." "With the glory which I had with thee before the world was." On this view we do not need to linger. Nor do I, after the general views of the opening of the sermon, need to linger on those passages which militate against the self-existence, such as: "Neither came I of myself, but he sent me." "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father." "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." These passages are to be read with the man Jesus standing, as it were, before you, speaking them into your ear; he is reminding you of that form of clay which is between you and the Divinity which is centered there; the self-existence which these words deny is the self-existence of the speaking Jesus, not

of the Christ within; these are all phrases which were to warn those who heard not to make a superstition of his person.

2. Omnipotence. Of course it is needless to go into an argument that God, when coming without measure into Jesus, and making him Jesus Christ, brings also his own attribute of omnipotence. But we must bring under the general principles which opened the sermon, and which were just repeated, several passages such as these: "All power is given unto *me* in heaven and on earth;" "I can of mine own self do nothing;" "My Father is greater than I." To understand these words, you have again to remember that they were spoken by one who could not in those superstitious days prevent them from adoring his person; his human side, — the dependent nature of that had to be kept always in view, and so they are ever to feel that he whose voice they hear is not God. The deific side is kept in the back-ground, as the spring which gives the visible human side all its effectiveness.

3. Omniscience. This again is one of the distinct attributes of God, wherever found, and therefore of God in Christ. But here again, as I have already said by way of illustration, — here again the necessity is laid upon Jesus Christ to keep the human side in distinct view, lest his disciples make a superstition of his person. "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." "As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." "Whatsoever I speak, there-

fore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." It is Jesus who says these words; not as Christ, but as Jesus. Those pronouns *I* and *me* refer to the being before you, which he would warn you against making valuable above its worth. He would not assert any thing of the inner life of the man Jesus, but wishes to remind you ever that the Jesus is human, the Christ divine.

I hope I have made my meaning clear. If I have, it is apparent that no stress is to be laid upon the words *given* and *sent*, in such passages as, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;" "All power is given me of my Father;" that the pronouns do not go deeper in their meaning than the human form which stood before them who heard the words; that he spoke of his body, of the Jesus, when he alluded to his mission in such words as *given* and *sent;* that he speaks of the Christ when he goes deeper, and says, "I came forth from the Father," or "with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Looked at in this view, there is nothing which militates against the divine nature which was in Jesus having all the attributes of God, but very much which favors the thought that in him dwelt bodily all the fulness of God. And I close again this second division of the discourse, by re-asserting that Jesus Christ had a double work to do, as God made manifest in the flesh; namely, to keep in view that he, the visible man, was commissioned or made the instrument of God's designs, and received all his force and

significance from the Father invisible; that he, the man Jesus, was *sent* as the outward vessel to contain the inward Spirit; that to *him*, the *seen*, the man, was given the power to do and say. And so they were ever to keep in mind that he, the man, was not all of God, and was not God, but limited in knowledge and power, — a mere man like themselves. And he was also to assert, in positive, unmistakable language, that God dwelt in him, that the Word was made flesh before them, that they who saw him saw the Father; that he was God manifest in man; that when he asserted the limitations which were on him, limitations in wisdom and power, and when he spoke of his dependence on the Father, not the inner life, the Christ was meant, but only the outward, the human; but that the God which was in him had of necessity all the attributes of God; that it could not be otherwise.

Let it not be supposed that it requires any exercise of caution, or any special discrimination, for the mind instantly to apprehend in which phase Jesus speaks, whether as implying outward form or inward spirit. As any one of us, when saying, I was hurt to-day by a falling stone, or, I was hurt by the remarks of another, would be instantly understood, just so readily does the mind conceive the stand-point of Jesus Christ.

But some one asks, Are you not making two Gods? By no means; the Christ in Jesus was *never* disunited from the Father, but was joined to him in that

organic unity, in that inseparable oneness, which is but expressed when Christ, speaking as Christ, and not as Jesus, says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." When Christ says, "I come forth from the Father," he says it as the Christ indeed, and not as the man Jesus; but still it is in a measure an expression tinged with the human element of derivation. But we are always to remember that the Christ was not disconnected from the Father, as I fear that we often think, but that, as God made manifest in the flesh, he was always united with God in organic unity; that his praying was in his human expression, and to show man his constant dependence upon God. There was, of course, no need for Jesus Christ to pray, save this; but prayer was a great thing, which he was to impress on the minds of men by example and precept. The most fitting symbol of this union of Christ with God, and the most perfect type of his inward divine nature, I find in the sunlight which is universal, and yet which can by a little glass lens be concentred at a focus, where its qualities are made clearly apparent, its latent forces developed, and yet that bright focus of concentred rays be not disunited from the all-pervading light of heaven.

But I think some one reminds me of that other doctrine of the Bible, that God dwells in the soul of a regenerated man, and asks how that tallies with the idea that God is God wherever he is, and therefore holds all his attributes, — among them, self-existence,

omnipotence, and omniscience. I will dispose of this in a word. God may indeed be in the soul of a regenerated man, and yet his attributes not be present to consciousness; his power, his secret working to will and to do after his own good pleasure, may be present to your consciousness, and yet not his attributes. With Christ it was different. The spirit was given unto Jesus in such measure that the attributes of God were present to his consciousness. He not only felt their power, but could analyze them and know them all. God is in the soul of a regenerated man, but not wrought into his consciousness further than as the sense of a hidden power, deepening the soul, bringing it into harmony with God, developing all its forces, neutralizing its sinfulness, but not so clearly seen as to be understood and analyzed.

I will devote the remaining portion of the sermon to the brief discussion of a question directly growing out of this; namely, Who died on the cross? We have two very conflicting assertions, which form the extremes of opinion: one, that Jesus died, the man, and that the Christ, the divine nature, had no sympathy in the suffering, was beyond its reach; the other extreme of opinion being that which does not hesitate to affirm in unmistakable language that God died. A great deal of the obscurity which has enveloped this subject has grown out of the misapprehension of the word *death*. Plainly, nothing about any being closes its organic existence at *death* but the body; the soul is only transferred to another sphere

of being. When Jesus died, the God which was in him could not die; it could only again be imbosomed in the Infinite, and at the resurrection be again ensphered in human form. But though only his body died, yet it is altogether supposable that in the sufferings which preceded the crucifixion, and which were after all the most intense, the Christ sympathized; nay, not only supposable, but necessarily so, for the experiences of his hours of sorrow transcended all the experiences of human sorrow. The significance of that grief did not lie in the mere bodily suffering, but in the fact that Christ had come to bring light into the world, and the world chose darkness rather than light, because its deeds were evil; and so when the torch was placed in the hand of the world, and then cast by that hand away, it was a thing that might make angels weep; he came unto his own, and his own received him not; and when his own, the children of God's love, were thrusting him from them, and bringing him to death, it was enough to melt God's own heart of tenderness to sorrow over his misguided children. Jesus might have met his death as a martyr meets his last hours, and be buoyed up with trust and faith; but when Christ came and offered the richest mercies of God, gave to man the knowledge of his soul's value and its destiny, proclaimed God by word and act, tried to infuse his own spirit, breathe his own life, into man, to be trampled, spit upon, and led out to his cross, — do we not read in this the reason of that

sorrow unto death? Do you take refuge in the idea of an impassible God, who does not know the sentiment of pity, love, tenderness; who looks unmoved on man's sin and neglect, and feels no stirring up of the mighty deeps of his nature, when man turns away from all the things which shall make him holy and happy? I know you do not; for these things are all predicated of God, as he is revealed to us through that New Testament, on which we hang our faith. It was then Jesus, the man, who died; but the hanging on the cross, and feeling the chill of death creep on, was not all the sorrow or the woe. It was the deific being who knew that; it was the spurned Christ who knew that; it was he who consented that the sinless Jesus should be hung between two thieves, and be made a curse to men, who felt that, — that the love there displayed, the abhorrence of sin there manifested, should meet the world's gaze, and that thus the world should know that God is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. On this ground we can securely stand; it redeems the last hours of Jesus from that common significance which his mere death would have had; it accounts for all the expressions of agony; it enhances a thousand-fold the value of the cross; and yet it does not lead us to that expression that I contemplate with horror, "that God, the mighty Maker, died."

And here, my friends, I leave this whole subject. It is an attempt, obscure and feeble indeed, to blend

two views which have before been thought to be purely antagonistic and mutually contradictory; and from the result to distil a beautiful unity of meaning. Read by the light of the fundamental thought of this sermon, the gospels gain new clearness and consistency; the character of Jesus Christ assumes a new exaltation; the Jesus appears before us in all a man's beauty, but with all a man's limitations, while the Christ shines out with unclouded radiance, and we receive without a murmur of dissent the word of holy writ, that "in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

SERMON III.

FAITH IN GOD, THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"The just shall live by faith." — GAL. III. 2.

I AM to speak to-day, my friends, of that life which comes through faith. The words which form my text are the very words which brought peace to Luther's soul, and grounded him forever on the great principle of justification by faith. The poor monk of Wittemberg, weary and wasted with a piety which consisted in starvings and penance, and vain works and self-imposed legality, reposed on this verse, and found rest and strength. And since it came to him with so blessed and with such sweet influences, so may it to us.

Suffer me, while I may have the privilege of ministering to you, not to be bound and cramped and confined to mere generalities and the ethics of religion; let me speak the message of my heart, for although there may be no harvest in this field, which for some months I have tried to till, let me at least have the poor satisfaction of knowing that in a faithful, consistent, and unconstrained way, I have tried to hold the truths of the gospel before you, and apply them to

the conscience and the heart. As from month to month the saving truths of Christianity are more and more clearly evolved before my sight, the value and privilege of the gospel ministry is ever heightened, and to hold my peace on those things which are a matter of life or death to the soul, becomes a galling, a most oppressive task. I am not obliged to make strictures longer on any name or any system: it is a higher and nobler work that summons me,—it is to deal to you, as I best may, the power and truth of the gospel.

Let me then state first a fact, then a problem, and lastly its solution.

The *fact* is, that religiously we are what our Supreme Deity is; *i.e.*, what we conceive God is, moulds us after the same pattern. Holy writ asserts, "as a man thinketh, so is he;" and it is equally true, as as a man thinketh of his God, so is he. Look at the nations which regard God as a being delighting in a ceremonial religion, and see how any one such, the French for example, becomes a people of ceremonies and outside show; look at men who regard God in his justice rather than in his mercy, and see how hard faced and stern they become; look at men who regard God in his mercy rather than in his justice and see how they fall into indifference and a religious toleration which is the growth of indifference; look farther away, and see how people who believe in a God who loves blood and the smell of sacrifice, become cannibals; how those who believe in a God

of serene calmness, a Brahma sleeping on the stars, become impassive and dreamy; see how men who believe in a surging, warlike God, become soldiers and love the battle field. So true is it that the Deity whom we conceive re-acts upon us, and shapes us reflexively after the model of our own imagining. And therefore it is, that he who shall hold up the true God to the world becomes its greatest benefactor, and supplies its greatest want.* The God who is evoked from the mind and imagination of even the most gifted of finite intelligences, must partake of the limitations and imperfections of the finite soul in which the conception was formed.

No men in a country called Christian, are consciously idolaters, and yet the number of virtual idolaters in this congregation and in the world around, is just the number of those who are not Christians, who do not acknowledge an entire loyalty to the true God. It matters not that men in this land do not make carved images of wood and stone, and fall down and worship them; the prostration before an image is but a small part of idolatry; were that all the mischief and the sin, it would never have been discountenanced in the positive, stern and uncompromising manner in which it has been met. It is because the image is a representation of something lying back of itself, not because the wood and

* I am gratified to notice, since the writing of this sermon that Judge Nash in his work on Morality and the State, has made the thought of this passage, the key note to his system.

stone are in themselves defiling. But when men make money their god, they will as surely feel its recoil in the hardening of their natures, as if they make a visible image of it, and calling it Plutus, or Mammon, fall down before it, and give it that outward adoration which only symbolizes the prostration of the soul before the power of wealth. So when the man of letters makes wisdom his God, what matters it in the essence of the thing whether his soul bows down before it, and all his strivings, hopes, anticipations and longings look forward to the results which learning gives, or whether he shapes his goddess after the fashion of woman, and *expresses* his soul's adoration of wisdom by his body's bending at the shrine of Minerva or Athene? Every man and woman here are either worshippers of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or are following, after strange gods, not bodying them forth in mortal shape, it may be, as the idolaters of distant lands do to-day, or as the cultivated nations of the past have done, but yet giving the secret adoration of their soul to some such god as Power, Success, Lust, Gold, Ease, Food, Drink, Sleep, and receiving in their own spirits the recompense. Is this not true, and are you not all of you feeling daily and hourly the recoil of your god upon yourself, either in drawing you up to the heavens, or pulling you back to the depths of earth?

The great problem of religion is then, to give unto man a *true* conception of the *true* God; the solution

is, in what way and through what instrumentality this is done. Any measure which can accomplish this, is destined to re-organize the order of the moral world. For as the mind's own conceptions of God re-act on the mind itself with augmented intensity, with even greater power does the true God when brought consciously and distinctly before the soul, assimilate it to Himself, conform it to Himself, and cause it to live in his own life. The exercise of the soul thus opening to its Maker is called Faith; the power of God thus acting on the soul is called Regeneration.

Now it is through Jesus Christ, the Saviour, the Mediator, that the solution is made. He is the bridge over which we pass to God and he passes to us. Men would have gone on forever fashioning their own ideas of God, and suffering from their reaction, in profligacy, in money worship, in battle loving, in pride, in all forms of sin, were it not for that transcendent mission of the Redeemer. His great work is to declare, disclose, manifest, image and reveal God, the true, unseen, eternal God. He came to do it in a twofold way, by declaration and by expression. He raises his voice; he proclaims that God is One: and thus he shatters dualism and polytheism by his word; he declares that God is just, and thus he upholds the eternal sancity of law; he declares that God is loving, and thus he asserts the wondrous mercy which pities weakness and yearns to save the tempted; he declares that God is forgiving,

and thus he wipes away the tear of the fallen, repentant one; he declares that God will not always bear with our wickedness, and thus he calls guilty man to his want of salvation; he declares the Fatherhood of God, and that picture-word tells the whole, and you, O earthly father, who watch, love, forgive, command and punish your child, you have your God in that one word, Father. And then again, and it is this on which I lay the greatest stress in my ministry,—Jesus did not alone *declare* God, he *expressed* him. He came not alone to tell of the Father as a distant being; he came to show men the Father. Jesus came to image forth the Father; to breathe God as it were, upon the world; to have all his actions, all his bearing, all the features of his character, evince God, manifest God, reveal God. For this reason God, not of course wholly, but the Spirit without measure, came and dwelt in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, and so in all the port of Jesus and in all his doings I see God, the true God, and thus I am admitted to the secrets of the Universe. In Jesus' perfect obedience to the law of God, I see the reverence which God has for the eternal sanctity of law; in Jesus' treatment of the widow's son, who was not a Jew, in his gracious benignity to that ignorant Samaritan woman, I see the equal regard which God has for all his children; in Jesus' disinterested benevolence, I see the watchful providence of God; in Jesus' words spoken as man never spoke, I see the boundless wisdom of God; in the miracles, I see the

power of God; in the cross, I see the love of God. What I know of God comes then dimly from what I see in the manifestation of himself in creation, and dimly also from what I see in the words of Christ, wherein he *declares* the Father, but chiefly in the manifestation of God in him. This to me is the grandest thought connected with religion: how bald and meagre looks the view of Jesus a mere man by this! how unfruitful and incomplete looks the view which makes him a messenger and not an embodiment of God; but how sublime and complete is the view of Jesus, the revealer and manifestation of the Infinite One.

And connected of course most clearly with this, and indeed flowing out from this, is the great fact, the great ending of all, that God can flow into the soul of man; that He, thus brought within the circle of our sympathies and affections, can draw closer to us than an earthly friend, and irradiate us with his love and fill us with his presence. The issue of all is, that through the great agency of Christ, God comes into the heart to be our helper and our strength; our joy and our consolation; our spur and our repose; our "Path, Motive, Guide, Original and End." The ultimatum of all is that instead of falling back upon ourselves, we should fall upon God, have our lives centre upon Him, and so instead of looking primarily for good resolves, seek the regeneration; and instead of following hard after self culture, hunger after sanctification.

And here our ways probably lead some of us apart, the roads diverge here, let us kindly confess it, and we have one guideboard inscribed justification by works and the other justification by faith. I take the latter way, and I would to God, as I value my own convictions of truth, that we were all in company. But you will allow me, I am sure my friends, to dwell upon a doctrine so explicitly taught by Scripture as justification by faith.

And justification I now use in no legal sense, but in that broader significance of *being made just.* It has a strict legal sense, but our path does not lead us to it now. How we are to be made just, pure, righteous, good, by faith, is the question before us. The general answer is obvious from the previous pages of this sermon. The righteousness which is of Faith comes from the free entrance of God to the soul. But you ask more specifically, you ask as a sinner, wanting to find the means which lead to this great result. You seek the way. The answer is more specifically made by Paul in that compend of heavenly wisdom, the Epistle to the Romans. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." To unfold this verse as it should be unfolded, would require more than the remaining pages of this sermon. It asserts in the first place our antagonism to God, and whoever doubts human sinfulness, is hardly in the way to profit by preaching. Were we not all sin

ners, standing in need of redemption from on high, it should be found written on the unerring page, "Every imagination of man's heart is *good* from his youth. The children of men have *not* gone out of the way. The heart of the sons of men is full of *goodness*, out of which proceed *holy* thoughts, benevolent deeds, chastity, truth, and reverence for God. This is the *approbation*, that darkness is come into the world, and men have loved *light* more than darkness, because their deeds are *good*. The whole world lieth in *righteousness*. O righteous Father, the world hath *known* thee. The friendship of the world is *friendship* with God. Be ye therefore *conformed* to the world, and be ye *not transformed* by any renewing of your mind. For that which is born of the flesh is *spirit*. Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must *not* be born again. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save those who were *not* lost."*

Now reverting to the main current of our thought, it would seem, at first sight, that the Being who should come to display the moral attributes of God to the world, would be greeted on his appearance with a general shout of jubilee, — would be welcomed with a world's heartiest gratulations. Can it be that man, though sinful and depraved, can resist the charm of a sinless being, all glowing with the beauty of perfection? And yet it is so; and men only come into hearty sympathy with Christ through

* From Dr. Lyman Beecher's views in Theology, p. 160.

the portal of his sorrow. It is true, men do see the perfection of manhood in Jesus, but seeing merely this, does not grasp the great mission of Christ. And seeing that the great glory and charm of Christ is, that he reveals through the medium of a human form the attributes of God, it so comes that men only enter into a complete reconciliation "to God by the death of his Son." Not till they have been linked to Jesus by those chains, which sympathy with him in his sorrow has forged, do men enter into that personal relation with God, which is all that is needed for the complete action of divinity on humanity to elevate, remould, purify, and make God-like. It is in this, as in all our relations with our enemies, we need that they be struck with some signal grief, before we consent to let our old enmity die, and yield to that generous flow of sympathy which shall unite us to them in a full reconciliation.

I will not speak to-day of the legal aspect of the death of Christ, but I will ask you, who are "yet enemies," to stand with the throng on Calvary, and gaze on the cross. What voice does it speak to you, what words whisper to your soul? He whom you see pierced and bleeding is that blessed Being who has come to offer men the greatest boon ever conferred on the race,—the gift of eternal life. He has come to reveal God to man. He has come to bear tidings of immortality. He has come to prepare men to receive God into their souls. Was he received as a benefactor, with joy and gratitude? Was he

hailed with pæans and thronged as the Saviour of the world? No, behold him *there*. He has had every indignity, every cruelty offered to him. First, rejected, then cast down and trampled upon, and now, led forth to the death of the worst of malefactors. The pain of the nails is but a little part, the parching thirst, the pricking of the thorns, the body's death, trifles all. But the gaze of scoffing crowds at the Anointed, the light-bearer; the desertion of the thousands, who, but a few days before, had spread palm-branches in his way, and shouted hosanna; the treachery of one of the very twelve; the cowardly denial of Peter, and the fleeing of the others; the repulsed yearning of the divinity within him towards men, — all this was grief, was woe. If I have one distinct thought of God in heaven, it is of a Being, who loathes sin and yearns for the sinner, and longs for his freedom from his imperilling temptation; and so reaches down this arm, in Christ, to snatch him back and save him. And God, in Christ, had this same yearning: and so long as I refuse to think of God as a stolid, impossible being, indifferent alike to virtue and to sin, I shall continue to think that the great agony and woe of the trial, the garden, and the cross, were the repulse of the deific being who came, bringing light to the world, but was spurned and rejected, and compelled to make his last great appeal to the world while bearing in his body the shame of a malefactor's death.

My friends, who are yet in enmity against God, that

cross appeals to you. You find earthly affections inconstant and deceitful: but through that form, God is assuring you of his eternal and unchangeable love, and by the agony of spirit and the bodily pain there undergone, imploring you to cry from the depths of your heart, "Those groans, those tears, that wounded side and dying form for me," and thus, through the path of repentance, God is trying to lead you on to reconciliation, and the life that comes, by faith. In all the grand machinery of redemption, the cross is the central piece; in your redemption, not in your sanctification, for that is the work of Jesus' *life.* Over Calvary leads the way from sin to life; the cross calls to you to stop and repent and pray: it tells you that if you try to get along without divine help you are hopelessly engaged, as if you were trying to fly. From the cross run down Calvary all those little rills that are to wash away evil and purify the world: the cross is to be the grand expression of God's abhorrence of sin; the great memorial of the sanctity of God's perfect law, whenever men should break it; the highest exponent of that love of God, which not only wins human love, energizes human capacities, draws human obedience, but displays the most glorious attribute of God's nature, which is love; thus leading you, "yet enemies," first, to repentance for your sins, and then, to a reconciliation with your loving, yearning, forgiving Father: thus, making man's broken image to conform again to the image of God.

And to those here, however many, however few, who "have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and who, much more, being reconciled, shall be saved by his life," I would address a few words. I would warn you of that paralyzing doctrine, that salvation is alone concerned with the destinies of another world, does not commence its glorious sway *here* and over the life. I would ask you ever to bear in your mind that to be *saved*, means primarily, the being saved from sin and sinning, the being kept in the path of life. Begin by looking this fact full in the face, bliss and condemnation are for the future: salvation is for the present. "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The death of Christ draws the sinner, awakens repentance, and leads to the regeneration, and then it is for him, with new interest in his Lord, to fix his reverent and loving gaze upon his life. Through the portal of Gethsemane and down the via dolorosa is the way that leads to the inner secrets of our Lord's life. As my college friend, who wished to read a tale with the most interest, began with the last chapter and read backwards, chapter after chapter, so must the life of Christ be read backward by the sinner, beginning with the great catastrophe that marked its close. Then it shall unroll itself before you, scene after scene, bringing the life and attributes of God close to your soul. You may trace that career and judge it from any stand-point: but let those, who accept the teachings of my ministry, have their great inter-

est in it, not because it unfolds a perfected humanity, but an embodied and forth-putting divinity. In that way shall it transform you; in that way shall the spirit of God, coming within the circle of your sympathies and affections, wear you down, take off the sharp corners of your pride, give you a new life, that of the Spirit, making you "to will and to do after his own good pleasure." Thus, "the just shall live by faith." Thus, your course shall be a continual growth in grace, a constant sanctification. Christ shall become your righteousness. The work of life, instead of being an incessant tug after virtue, a wearisome labor with feeble results, shall be spontaneous activity; all done with joy, all attempted with ease. God does the work. His spirit, granted through the agency of Christ, is deep in the soul, and prompts to good, and gives strength to carry its promptings into act.

And all that God demands of you is the confession that you are indeed a sinner, and make the world your god, and turn from Him. He helps you to repent; he demands that you, with humility of soul, should come to him and cry for his spirit, saying, "Lord help me, or I perish;" and if you are ready for him, he will surely come and lighten your heart and carry your burdens. How simple, yet how hard! Yes, simple enough for a child to follow, but oh how hard for those who ask no favor of God, who demand, like one of whom I once told you, that God would be just: he did not wish that he would be

generous. This life, "which is hid with Christ in God," is a free gift. As disobedience, discord, and spiritual death have come into the world by man's going astray, breaking the divine law, so God, foreseeing the effect of man's disobedience, did, in the beginning, devise this scheme of winning the world back through Christ.

Faith, then, my friends, signifies, in the sense in which we use it to-day, vastly more than credence or assent. You may nod your head to every proposition, and yet not have faith. You may believe that Christ was the Son of God, and not have the whole of faith. But if you submit your soul, plastic, impressible, to God, whom you most fully know through Christ, — if you let the true God be breathed into your being by Christ, — if you come within the inner circle, and there experience a sense of God moulding you, acting upon your character, and making you a new creature, you have faith, Christian faith.

And here, let me protest against any substitute for this exalted power, to be found in receiving dogmas. Paradoxical as it may sound, faith is not always Faith: you may assent to all the dogmas of the world, and your assent will neither save you from sin nor from whatever future awaits you. The faith that comes from clinging to dogma narrows and belittles the soul, but the faith that comes from having God act upon your soul and link you to your Maker, exalts and widens the soul. It is the fruit that proclaims you or exposes you. Though you may cling

to the letter of creed or dogma, and your life be corrupt, mean, and false, I will say you have no faith, and cry shame on you for pretending to wear the livery of heaven; but if, through Christ, the way, you come unto God and repose on him and receive him into your soul, you have faith, and you shall live by your faith.

How glorious all this seems! Though I should lose my pulpit to-day for saying it, I should feel constrained to declare my sense of the exalted nature of this Method of Salvation that comes through the Mediatorship of Christ. How wise it appears, how perfectly adapted to our wants! Henceforth, my friends, let us ever fix our eyes on Christ, that being reconciled through his death, we may be saved by his life. He is the bridge over which we pass to God, and God in turn comes unto us. He is the mediator by whom we have access to the Father. He is "God manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world unto himself."

Fellow-mortal, whether reconciled or unreconciled, I pray that God, in his abundant mercy, will bestow his spirit upon you, that you may live the life of Faith. It is the easiest of all lives to lead, for you go out of yourself, as it were, to let the Mighty One sway you and guide you. It is the happiest of all lives to lead, for God in the soul is a friend who will never desert you or prove false. It is the most glorious of all lives to lead, because it transforms you into one of God's instruments to build up and make

fair the hopes of the world; and the Christians on the earth hold the future in their hands. Sinner, may the death of Christ lead you to your reconciliation, and open to you the way that leads to the life that is hid in God; Christian, may God always near your love and sympathy in Christ, be ever growing into your inward spirit, fashion you more and more after his image, and make you grow to the stature of the Sons of God.

SERMON IV.

SAVING BELIEF.

"Saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come; that is, on Christ Jesus." — ACTS, 19 : 4.

THE story of that ovation of Christianity in the first era is to us as mysteriously singular, and as hopelessly historical as any triumph that can be named. Christianity, begotten, as it seemed to men, in the brain of an unlettered enthusiast of Galilee, setting itself against the traditions of one, the wisdom of another, the doubting of another, and the sin of still another; and yet vanquishing *all*, — it was a most impressive spectacle. Even as we read the record of it, running all through the book of Acts, to us of this day, the story has the aspect of a fairy tale. We see men strong in the power of a great trust, going into every kind of place, meeting every kind of men, and yet conquering them with as true a victory as that of Jena or Austerlitz. Churches rise in their path, human passions, follies, sins, are pruned or cut down, honesty, thoughtfulness, and worship are built up. In Judea, Christianity conquers bigotry; in Athens, it masters philosophy; in Corinth, drunkenness and licentiousness; in Ephesus, money-loving and money-getting.

Now, human nature has remained very much the same from that day to this. Christianity, as contained in the Gospels, and the letters of the Apostles, has to deal with just such men, women, and children as it encountered at first. Boston is our Athens, New York our Corinth, Chicago our Ephesus. Christianity conquered in the beginning, why does it not to-day? In the first years, whenever disciples met and supped, it was a communion to them, a remembrance of the Lord Jesus. Why is it hard to-day to assemble a band much larger than the original twelve to eat and drink together in memory of him? Alas, we all know the reason. It is because we no *longer believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* We read his gospel in our schools, but how quickly do we throw it down, and take up the instruction books; we swear upon it in the courts, but how trippingly do the clerk's words run. We read from it at the opening day, when we go from our morning meal to labor, but how vacant are the faces, and vagrant the thoughts of the home circle. We go to church if it is fair, and warm, and we and ours are perfectly well, and we are defied on every hand as we seek excuses to stay away. Arriving there, we give a patient, or a reluctant hearing, and go away to forget the prayer, the sermon, our life and our destiny. And all this because we no longer believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

I suppose you have no more doubt than I, that if we could *believe* on him we could realize to-day, all the earnestness all the influence, all the power of the

olden time. The man who can go forth into the world to-day, armed with the mighty "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me," has no limitations to his power. Ignorant, he can vanquish the most cunning sophistry; poor, he can delight in uncounted riches; hungry, he can eat bread that other men know not of; weak, he can cope with the strongest adversary; alone, he can commune with unnumbered friends; "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

I do not wish to repeat in this sermon the train of thought contained in a sermon which you heard last fall, on the Personal Influence of Jesus; but *now*, look not at Peter and John filled with a new spirit, and remoulded by contact with the living Jesus, but look at Paul, who never saw his great Master, save when a young student at Jerusalem he may have had glimpses of him on whom all men's eyes were more or less fixed. See Paul, I say, struck with conviction of sin, overwhelmed with remorse, blinded with doubting what he should do, see Paul come out of these overhanging shadows, into the clearest light; note his receiving the record of Jesus' life, not from his own memory, but from the accounts of others, and see, nevertheless, how mighty was his new power, how high his joy, how strong his *belief*. In Paul just as much as in James and Peter and John, companions of the Saviour, the ceaseless refrain is, the *Lord*

Jesus, the *life* that is in *Christ*, *Christ* the *Head* of our *Life*. Paul's strength lay in his *belief*. There was not a cloud that came between him and his Saviour. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise." "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe;" "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." All that is noble, all that is truly divine, he found pictured in the character of Christ. He saw, as every Christian must see, all the excellences, nay, all the attributes of God in Christ. The Son had divine lineaments; his virtues were so transcendent, his wisdom so profound, his spirit so all-embracing, his life so abounding, going out and re-animating the dead, giving new force to a withered arm, or a palsied trunk; so in all his words, deeds, spirit, like what he taught his Father to be, that Paul with all others who knew intimately of Jesus, or who communed intimately with him, saw in him the image of God, found out, through Christ, the nature of the all-embracing God, and so drank in with all eagerness the life of Christ, and thus the life of God.

Brethren who with me are trying to make this New Testament profitable to us, who are trying to make God and Christ our Helpers, what have we to do but to join hand in hand with our great brother Paul, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. God forbid that as you hear these words, you should ask

without receiving any answer, are those words the catch-words of theology, or are they the real embodiment of what I need! So far as I who call your thought to them, am concerned, they form no unmeaning, stereotyped phrase, which I repeat to you, because it is my duty to preach and I must preach something. You *believe* on your mother. When she died, your heart told you that you had lost the best friend you ever did have or ever should have. You know that she suffered for you, toiled for you, shortened her days for you, and you love her for it, and buckle her memory to your heart with a man's grasp. You know that she always gave you her best counsel, her tenderest pity in your sorrow, her heartiest congratulations in your joy. Therefore you believe in her. I can use no better phrase than this, and now I want to use no other. You believe in her. You believe in your sister, you believe in your wife, in your husband, in your child, in some one, or it may be more, tried and cherished friends. You know, see, feel, and thoroughly understand the largeness of the word *believe*, when it is applied to mother, sister, wife, friend. To Paul the word was just as full of meaning when it was applied to Christ. He *believed* on Him. He left father, mother, houses, lands, for His name's sake. He did exactly what we ought to do always, and what we do do, almost never.

Confronting a desire to believe in him, in the hearts of some of us, may be a sort of scepticism. So long as we harbor that I believe that the genial

influences of Jesus are chilled in passing from the gospel to us. If we have doubts whether our mother wrought for us with a loving heart, robbed herself of sleep for us, endured some privations for us, we have lost somewhat of our belief in her. So if you cannot come face to face with the Christ of the New Testament, accept him wholly, words, deeds, and spirit, you are preparing to improve your faith by freezing it. During my college course, I drifted, as many young men there do through many currents of theological speculation, "Blinded with doubt, in wildering mazes lost." Trained in younger days in the very centre of New England Orthodoxy, on first beginning to think independently, as boys often do on religious things, I began doubting about the real resurrection of this mortal, fleshly body, and did not find a resting-place this side of fatalism and the rule of a *Law* on the throne of a God. As to so many others in the darkness and irresolution of such a creed, light by and by began to dawn, I drifted back on the returning currents, to Christianity. But I well remember the last scene in that inward three years' struggle. It was the trying to cull out the words of Christ and leave his marvellous works; it was the trying to get the benefit of a saving belief without accepting the miracles. But it is a matter of sure experience with me, that not till that barrier fell was I under the power of the Christian religion. Nor is this a single experience. It is confirmed to me by the similar experience of friends. I think, nay

I know, that every man and woman in this audience will confess, that so far as our observation extends, men are so much the more devoted to purity and righteousness, as they are the simple and entire receivers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides insisting upon this, that a real, saving belief in Christ cannot exist with a spirit of scepticism, I will add, that a saving belief is not the accepting of an historical fact. In the first days this might do, and often, with many did do, for the believing in this way assumed the whole question. When men who were looking for a great Deliverer, a Messiah, granted that Jesus fulfilled in himself the longing hopes of men, believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, meant, comprehended all that we mean by being born again. But the hearty faith in Jesus the Messiah which burns on the pages of the Acts with a brilliance, unintelligible to hasty readers, became at last a leaden acquiescence, general, and almost profitless. Almost everybody believes that Christ has come in the world. Strauss has few followers in Germany, and not many more here in America. There is probably not one before me who does not accept as a historical fact, that Jesus lived, suffered, and died; greatly lived, patiently suffered, nobly died. Let me not try to do away with that. Even such a belief has its mission, and more surely is he in the way to the kingdom of heaven, who believes in Christ as he believes in Alexander, than he who, like Strauss, of Germany, takes the record in his

hand, and as a boy holds a seeded dandelion betwixt his thumb and finger and blows the seedy lightness contemptously away, so lifts the shining Gospel high in the air, and cries—Vanish, thou Nazarene! But we want a better belief than that, closer, more binding. We want the daguerreotype of Jesus hung up in our hearts, so that when we turn our face inward, we may see its eternal beauty. We want him shrined there like the image of a departed mother, every look of love and gentle admonition. We want to believe in him so strongly that he shall be our only standard in measuring men, and that we shall no longer be content with so-called religious men who in moral height but reach the average goodness of our city. We want to believe in him so strongly that pictures of Jesus shall be the most prized decorations of our parlors, medals with his image, our most valued antiquities, Jerusalem, Bethany, Nazareth, Bethlehem, the central spots of our interest.

At the risk of wearying you, I will enter upon a closer analysis of this great subject of believing in Christ. I have tried to find a faint analogy to this belief in Christ, in your love for your mother, or what I chose to call your belief in her. But that does not show the whole extent of a Christian's belief; it but indicates it, it does not reveal it. Nor is the belief in Christ the same unchanging thing from age to age. It is an expression of very different significance now from what it was at the first. Then to believe that Jesus was the great being whom he

claimed to be comprised a large measure of belief; but in these days it is a most comprehensive term. Accepting the evidence of Christianity comprises but a small part of belief. It is not alone a receiving of Jesus as the Son of God in an historical sense; it is not alone the trying to live in accordance with his precepts; it is not alone the endeavor to follow his example; it is not alone receiving his sacrificial blood; it is not alone receiving the spirit of Christ; it is not one but all of these; a belief in Christ covers all this ground; it is the broadest word which we use in our list of duties owed. God holds every Christian believer accountable for all these elements as parts of his belief. It is true, if you have the last, the spirit of Christ, you have by implication all the rest; and so there are two ways of coming to this great duty and privilege of believing in Christ; a shorter way and a longer way. You may feel your sins as a heavy burden, you may be filled with a sense of your unworthiness before God, even when you are infidel, an atheist even; and then when some one puts you in the way of salvation through Christ, you may run to the cross, confess your sin, cry for the mercy of God, pray for the regeneration, and even while you stand as it were in the shadow of the cross, the Holy Spirit may steal upon your spirit, the spirit of Christ may come as a regenerative influence to your soul, and all your doubts shall fly like the mist before the sun; you shall feel the spirit of Christ in your heart, a stranger there, re-

ceived with welcome, cherished with joy. Shall some one come to you and say, do you follow the precept, imitate the example of Christ? You cry out, a new spirit is within me which is leading me to that very example and those very precepts, not only urging me to follow them, but making it easy for me to do so. Another comes and says, do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the anointed Christ? And again listening to the voice of the new spirit within you, you are constrained to answer, "I believe that he was the Christ, the only begotten Son of God;" and if some senseless and thoughtless one comes and asks, do you believe there ever was even a man, Jesus of Nazareth on the earth? With this singing joy of Christ in your soul, you can hardly answer with patience, but you have to say that there is a testimony within you, in the new experience of your heart, which tells you that no sophistry, no special pleading can ever convince you that Jesus is not within you, by his own spirit. This is one way in which by new birth you come to a belief in Christ. And there is another way. It is slower, but it is no better and no more sure. In sermons on the evidence of Christianity, I have tried to approach you in this way. It deals primarily with the understanding, not with the conscience. It is synthetic; it builds the house of faith in Christ by successive additions; not in its wholeness at once; it is demanded by some minds; it appeals to those chiefly who do not feel their sinfulness and do not know their need of one to

save them from their sins. First they have to be brought to confess that it is the merest folly to deny that there must have been a man Jesus, a teacher and physician, who lived 1800 years ago in Palestine; then by long and toilsome effort, they are to be brought to confess that the argument is irresistible which proves that the man Jesus was not and could not have been a man like ourselves; and must have been One commissioned by heaven to bear special tidings from God to man; at this point you enter upon a first stage of belief; there you are constrained to admire the perfectness of his life; and as you try to copy perfect things, you try in your own power to imitate it; you see the completeness and the moral beauty of his teachings, in your own might you try to imitate them, in these two things, imitating his example and following his precepts, you are passing into the second hall of belief; you go on, and then the significance of the cross comes to you, and with the significance of the cross comes its power; and you now are on sacred ground, which trembles under your tread with divine love: you are now away from the province of the head and are in the shrine of the heart; you are in the hall which is canopied with divine love, in which the spirit of God moves in invigorating gales, and which has Christ as its one great Guest. And thus you have come by a second way to the holy precints of belief. I may hardly say in this public way, what a joy comes with this fulness of faith. I may not declare the ecstacy of

heart which results from such completeness of belief. You may follow the precepts and imitate the example of Christ with cold and distant admiration; but not till the cross speaks to you, will you enter into the inner halls of this mystery and feel that the sweetest bond on the earth is that which binds Christian hearts, and that the highest joy in the heart is the love of Christ.

In our Sunday School question book, the two questions come together, what is eternal life, and what is it to believe in Christ? I need hardly say that what answers one answers the other. Such believing in Christ as I have tried to hold up to you is the faint symbol of the eternal life. The eternal life is the life that is hid with Christ in God. Heaven is what comes from belief in Christ; believe in Christ and ye shall know what and where is heaven. Eternal life is but another term for heaven; and heaven is but another term for that joy which comes with a fulness of belief in Christ.

I cannot close without urging you to enter into a belief which shall reward you with such joy. It is yours to take; it is not yours to refuse. How long I may minister to you I do not know; but if I have one longing in my heart, it is a wish to make my ministry converge to this one great purpose, to win you away from worldliness to Christ. You whose hearts are leaping in joy at the mystery of godliness, who know that peace that passeth understanding, can endorse every word which I utter of the joy which comes

with a belief in Christ; can confirm every syllable which extols the eternal life. Speak your word wherever you go to rouse men from their apathy, to convince them of their unworthiness, and to win them to the cross. My friends who do not profess to have entered into the holy places of believing in Christ, are these words not the words which Scripture warrants? If they are, and your heart craves one higher than an earthly companion to fill all its needs, to satisfy all its yearnings, let me point you to one, to One who can bring you to God and fill you with joy; that One is the Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON V.

THE TRINITY, ITS REASON AND ITS POWER.

"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."—MATT. 28: 19.

THE subject of the Trinity is not a mere metaphysical subtlety, reserved and perpetuated from age to age for the amusement of theologians, for the sharpening of ministers' wits, and the entertainment of congregations who love to see the distractions of the church and delight in the quarrel to which those distractions lead. The doctrine of the Trinity has indeed great claims upon the consideration of us all, because connected with it are all the problems which concern man's being rescued from sin, the purification of his heart and life by religion, and his peace and joy and acquiescence in the time of sharp Providential trial and affliction. It is not therefore to feed a craving for theological disputation, nor to say harsh words, nor to indulge in uncharitable feelings, that I call your attention to the Divine Nature, but rather to enter on a course of thought in this direction which shall carry us, as in the future we shall deliberate on this and kindred themes, right to the heart of religion.

For perverted as the doctrine of the Trinity has

been, unquestionably it holds a measure of truth and power which have given efficacy to the Christian religion. It contains the true idea of God which no mere *message* brought from God and told to man would have given: it was for Jesus, the embodiment of God, to show forth God by more and plainer manifestations than mere words would give: it involves the regeneration of man by the Holy Spirit of God, one of the grand ideas of vital religion: it contains the doctrine of atonement through the cross of Christ, for that has its significance as the token of God's love, and of his abhorrence of sin: — indeed, give up the idea of God in Christ, of the Holy Spirit being of God, and you have given up the life of the Christian religion. Unitarianism has done this, and that is why it is dying and cannot hold out long.

The word Trinity may not be found in the Scriptures, but the idea which it embodies, is there and so are its elements, and where there is the expression Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there is the Trinity. To war about a *word* is pusillanimous: the *thing* is what should alone come into dispute. The question is, in scientific relations, in all that comes under the province of natural history, is there a God, a Creator, Sustainer, Father? How shall this God be revealed to our moral nature save as he shall display his moral attributes in the figure of man, his moral creature? This gives us Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh. How shall we be made strong and be rescued from the slough of our sin without God

strengthens our will and arms us with his own power, and quickens us with Himself? This gives us the Holy Spirit. And all this we sum up and imply in one word when we say Trinity. It gives God to us in all his relations, as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. As Neander has truly said: —

"The essence of Christianity according to John, is comprised in this, that the Father is known only in the Son, and only through the Son can man come into communion with the Father. But no one can be in communion with the Son without partaking of the Holy Spirit which he promised in order to renew human nature in his own image. Both John and Paul place the essence of Christian theism in worshipping God as the Father through the Son, in the communion of the divine life which he has established, or in the communion of the Holy Spirit, the Father through the Son dwelling in mankind, animated by his Spirit, agreeably to the triad of the Pauline benediction, — the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit: and this is the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity in the connection of Christian experience. It has an essentially practical and historical significance and foundation: it is the doctrine of God revealed in humanity, which teaches men to recognize in God not only the original source of existence, but also of salvation and sanctification. From this Trinity of revelation, as far as the divine causality images itself in the same, the reflective mind, pursuing this track, seeks to elevate

itself to the idea of an original triad in God, availing itself of the intimations which are contained in John's doctrine of the Logos, and the cognate elements of the Pauline theology."

The phase which the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be taking before the Protestant world, is gratifying. It formerly lay an unused, bewildering mystery: a burden to the believing heart. When it degenerates into tri-theism, as it too often does, it is and always has been a millstone round the neck of those who would fain be Christians, and drives many a young and aspiring soul to the coldness and blankness of Unitarianism. Now its practical relations are made known: the stress of argument, instead of being laid on the eternal distinctions in the Godhead, is laid on the economical revealings of God in time, and while a few words can overthrow Sabellianism in its distinguishing features, through the pathway of Sabellianism, a man can pass to the full appreciation of what the power of the Trinity is and to the clearest conception granted to the finite mind, of those distinctions in the Godhead which we always recognize when we speak of the present and ever-loving Christ, and the abiding influences of the Holy Spirit.

Neander, in his "Church History," grants that there may be an eternal distinction in the divine nature, corresponding to the revealments, as Father, Son, and Spirit, but he lays the main stress on the economic value of the Trinity, as the subjective manner in which God is brought to the heart and

life, as well as the knowledge of man. He speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, as that in which Christianity finds its ultimate completion in connection with redemption. His words are: "It is this doctrine by which God becomes known as the original Fountain of all existence: as He, by whom the rational creation, that had become estranged from Him, is brought back to the fellowship with him; and as He in the fellowship with whom it is from henceforth to subsist; the threefold relation in which God stands to mankind, as primal ground, mediator, and end,—Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, in which threefold relation the whole Christian knowledge of God is completely designated. Accordingly, all is embraced by the apostle Paul, when, in the benediction, he sums up all in the formula, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit." The foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity must be given in the Old Testament; and that foundation is the doctrine of God, whose agency is in the world, through his Word and with his Spirit."

The distingushed theologian, whose words we have just quoted, has given briefly in them the true conception of the Trinity, its historical significance, its real meaning, and the source of its working power. Dr. Bushnell has done the same service to the world, in a number of the *New Englander*, for 1854, which doctrinally forms the needed supplement to the "God in Christ" sermon, and which shows, perhaps,

more fully than any essay in the language, the power of the Trinity, and the truth embodied in that word. I wish that that essay had been more read than it has been, for the sermon was but a partial advance to the truth; and it was impossible for Dr. Bushnell to pause long at its conclusion; and, in the later essay, the Sabellianism of the "God in Christ" sermon is simply outgrown, and the full, rational doctrine of the Trinity reached. What is so patent to the careful reader, it is not immodest for a young man to remark on. Not that the sermon on the divinity of Christ was a full exposition of the views of Sabellius, or of a Patri-passian, for in its main, though not most prominent characteristic, it was entirely orthodox; but the stress which it laid on the temporal revealment of God in Christ, called the attention of the American Church to the Trinity, as a working truth, rather than a baffling mystery. The essay, published six years subsequent to the preaching of that noted sermon, proclaimed to those who saw it, his entire orthodoxy on the divine nature.

It is noteworthy, as a Unitarian friend has pointed out to me, that as long ago as 1820, Jacob Abbott, a most judicious and orthodox writer, in his valuable "Corner Stone," stated the doctrine of the Trinity in the manner in which Dr. Bushnell has done, and in almost the same language in which my own views were first communicated to this congregation. You may be surprised at the parallel language to that which I employed not a month after coming among

you, and ere I knew that any one had made before me a similar statement of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Jacob Abbott says, "If we succeed in obtaining just conceptions of the Deity, as the invisible and universal *power*, pervading all space, and existing in all time, we shall at once perceive that the only way by which he can make himself known to his creatures, is by *acting himself out*, as it were, in his works; and, of course, the nature of the manifestation which is made will depend upon the nature of the works. In the structure of a solar system, the Deity, invisible itself, acts out its mighty *power* and its intellectual *skill*. At the same time, it is exercising, in a very different scene, its untiring *industry* and unrivalled *taste*. And so everywhere this unseen and universal Essence acts out its various attributes by its different works. We can learn its nature only by the character of the effects which spring from it.

But the great question after all, is to come. How can such a Being exhibit the moral principle by which his mighty energies are controlled? *How shall he act out moral principle?* Can he do it by the loveliness of the evening landscape, or the magnificence and splendor of countless suns and stars? No. He might *declare* his moral attributes as he might have declared his power; but, if he would bring home to us the one, as vividly and distinctly as the other, he must act out his moral principles by a moral manifestation, in a moral sense; and the great beauty of Christianity is, that it represents him as doing so.

He brings out the purity and spotlessness, and moral glory of the divinity, through the workings of a human mind, called into existence for this purpose, and stationed in a most conspicuous attitude among men. Thus, the moral perfections of divinity show themselves to us in the only way by which, so far as we can see, it is possible directly to show them, by coming out in action, in the very field of human duty, by a mysterious union with a human intellect and human powers. It is GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH; the visible moral image of an all-pervading moral Deity, himself forever invisible.

The third great manifestation of the Deity which is made to us, is in the exertion of a direct power upon the human heart. This, you will observe, is a manifestation entirely different from those to which we have already alluded. In his direct power over moral agents, God mysteriously mingles his influences with their moral powers, so as to lead *them* to act, and by the character of the results, we likewise, in this case, learn his character. The Bible exhibits them as the effects of a peculiar operation of the Holy Spirit, as it is termed, upon the human heart.

Such are the three great manifestations of Himself to men, which the one unseen, all-pervading essence has made, as exhibited to us in the Bible, and in our own experience and observation."

This language is neither obscure nor devoid of reason; but although it does not bring out one phase

of the doctrine, yet this expression of what others have usually taught, in the use of person for manifestation, is clear, and shadows forth the power, as well as truth, of this great doctrine.

Much of the common talk, regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, is idle, shallow, and puerile; betraying to a man, having any more than a smattering of theology, gross ignorance. I grant that there is a vast amount of Tritheism in the world, — and in high places, too, — taught by clergymen of wide reputation, and found in the writings of some men called standard divines. But, as it is in the ability of every man to trace the doctrine of the Trinity historically, and become acquainted with the discussions at Nice, it reflects no credit on Unitarian and Universalist ministers to stand in their pulpits and make such a statement of the Trinity as I heard a few months ago in a Universalist church, not a thousand miles from this place. "Here is one person," said the speaker, "and there is another, and yonder is yet another. What absurdity to suppose that those three can make one!" And such a statement of the Trinity passed current with the congregation, and I do not wonder that the blindly led people call such a doctrine absurd. And yet the very absurdity of this statement ought to make an intelligent layman suspect that the Trinity is not laid rightly before him in that language; for it may safely be put down as an axiom, that men do not lay aside all common sense when they take up religion. When you hear a man make

such a statement of the Trinity as that, you may assume one of two things, that he does not know whereof he is speaking or that he is fraudulently endeavoring to work upon your prejudices.

So far as Unitarians are concerned, they owe much of their ignorance of *real* Trinitarianism to Channing, who, great and pure as he was, did not necessarily know all things in theology. Though there was much Tritheism in Channing's day, yet it was in his power to know what Trinitarianism meant; and after Prof. Stuart set him right, it betrays something amiss in his character that he did not accept the correction.

After quoting Channing's statement of the Trinity, which accuses the Orthodox of having God made up of three intelligent agents, each one of whom has his own particular consciousness, will, and perception, Prof. Stuart grants that such a statement would convey not Trinitarianism but Tritheism, or a belief in three gods. "But," adds he, "I cannot help feeling that you have made neither an impartial nor a correct statement of what we believe, or what we are accustomed to teach and defend." "But among all the different explanations which I have found, I have not met with any one which denied, or at least was designed to deny the Unity of God. All admit this to be a fundamental principle. All acknowledge that to deny it would be the grossest absurdity, as well as impiety." "And," continues Prof. Stuart, "when I conceive this fact, so plain and so easily established, and then look through your statement of the doctrine

of the Unity of God, and the Trinity, as given above, I confess it gives me pain, to think that you have not conceded, or even intimated, that Trinitarians do, or can admit the Unity of God. But to appropriate solely to those, who call themselves Unitarians, the belief that there is but one God; or to construct an account of the Trinitarian creed (as it seems to me you have done, in the paragraph on which I am remarking), so as not even to intimate to your hearers or readers that your opponents admit, or advocate the *divine Unity*, is doing that which you would censure in an antagonist, and which cannot well subserve the interests of inquiry after truth.

"After all, the statement which you exhibit of our views, is very far from that which we (or, at least, all the Trinitarians with whom I am acquainted) should make of our belief. I do not deny that *some* writers on this subject have given reason to make a statement not very diverse from yours, as it regards the explication of the Trinity. But though I readily admit, that efforts to explain what, in the nature of the case, is inexplicable, may have misled some in their efforts to acquire religious knowledge, or given occasion to others of stumbling; yet I am not prepared to admit that the great body of Trinitarians have given just occasion to charge them with a denial of the *Unity of God*, or with an opinion subversive of this."

Prof. Stuart continues, "The common language of the Trinitarian symbols is, '*That there are three* PERSONS *in the Godhead.*' In your comments upon this,

you have all along explained the word *person*, just as though it were a given point that we use the term here in its *ordinary* acceptation as applied to *men*. But can you satisfy yourself that this is doing us justice? Most certainly, neither the Nicene Fathers, nor any intelligent Trinitarian, could use the term person in such a latitude as you represent us as doing, and as you attach to it. We profess to use it merely from the poverty of language; merely to designate a belief of a real distinction in the Godhead, and NOT to describe independent, conscious beings, possessing *separate*, and *equal* essences, and *perfections*. Why should we be obliged so often to explain ourselves on this point? Is there any more difficulty here, or any thing more obnoxious than when you say, God is angry with the wicked every day? You defend yourself in the use of such an expression by saying that it is only the language of approximation; that it is intended to describe that in the mind of the Deity, or in his actions, which corresponds in some measure, or in some respects to anger in men; not that he really feels the passion of anger. You will permit me then to add, that we speak of *persons* in the Godhead, to designate that which in some respect or other corresponds to *person* as applied to men, *i.e.*, some distinction; *not* that we attach to it the meaning of three beings, with a separate consciousness, will, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.

"I could heartily wish, indeed, that the word *person* never had come into the symbols of the churches, be-

cause it has been the occasion of so much unnecessary dispute and difficulty. But since it is in common use, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, altogether to reject it. If it must be retained I readily concede that the use of it ought to be so guarded as not to lead Christians in general into erroneous ideas of God. Nor can I suppose that Christians generally have such ideas, or understand it to mean what you attribute to our belief. Then surely it is not the best mode of convincing your opponents, to take the word in a sense so different from that in which they understand it, and charge them with the absurdities consequent upon the language of their creed. It has always been a conceded point, that in the discussion of difficult subjects, or the statement of them, terms might be used aside from their ordinary import. And what can teach us in a plainer way that Trinitarians do use the word *person* in this way, than that they agree that *God is one* in essence and in attributes?

"It might have been justly expected likewise, that before they were charged with subverting the divine Unity, the meaning of the word *person* should have been carefully investigated in the ancient records which describe its first introduction into the symbols of the church. One of your rules of exegesis, to which I have with all my heart assented, demands that 'every *word* should be modified and explained, according to the *subject* which is discussed, according to the PURPOSES, feelings, *circumstances* and principles of the writer.' Do us the justice to apply this

law of interpretation to our language, and the dispute between us about the meaning of *person* is forever at an end.

"The present generation of Trinitarians, however, do not feel responsible for the introduction of such technical terms in senses so various from the common ideas attached to them. They merely take them as they find them. For my own part, I have no attachment to them; I think them injudiciously chosen, and heartily wish they were by general consent entirely exploded. They certainly serve in most cases merely to keep up the form of words without definite ideas; and I fear have been the occasion of many disputes in the church. The *things* which are aimed at by these terms, I would strenuously retain; because I believe in the divine origin and authority of the Bible, and that its language, fairly interpreted, does inculcate these things. And candor on your part, will certainly admit, that *things only* are worth any dispute. Logomachy is too trifling for a lover of truth."

I was repulsed from Orthodoxy as some of you know, by what seemed to me the proclaiming of three Gods, by Tritheism, not Trinitarianism. I do not think that the pastor, whom I sincerely loved, knew that his words were driving one of the lads of his congregation to Unitarianism, but so they did. There being then that obscurity in the word person, used in its two senses, when I first began to see the interior power of the Trinity and its relations to the Christian life, I preferred to substitute for it, as

more truly expressive, the word manifestation, as you remember was my wont. Later I learned that I was not alone in this, as I have told you to-day: and while a deceitful man may use the word manifestation in a double sense, it seems to me to be as serviceable as any in use to designate the relations of the Divine Nature to the world and to sinning man.

I find in Vol. viii., of the *New Englander* an admirable article on the Trinity, which embodies the ripest Orthodox conclusions. The writer's name I do not know. He says: "If we follow the guidance of Scripture, we are to conceive of God as *one, one being* or existence, one mind, creating, directing, controlling all things, — possessing the faculties and attributes essential to all mental or spiritual existence, as consciousness, understanding, will, affections," etc.

"We cannot modify this idea of the divine unity in any essential point without departing from the track of revelation. The moment we conceive of the Deity as consisting of three distinct individuals, each possessing consciousness, affections, will of his own, we contradict and virtually abandon the true Scriptural idea of *one God.* Whatever guard we may throw about our language, we do, in fact, from that moment, believe not in *one* God, but in *three.* It is plain then that we must either adopt a modified view of the divine unity, abandoning the strict and proper sense of the term, and suffering the different divine persons — Father, Son, and Spirit — to be one, in no other sense than as Peter, James, and John are one,

i.e., specifically so, one in disposition, purpose, heart, aim, nature; or else we must modify our idea of the individuality of the Son and Spirit so as not to conceive of them as separate existences or beings, separate minds, thinking, devising, willing, etc., in distinction from the one divine mind. Our choice is between the two: either *this* or *Tritheism*. *This* and not *Tritheism* we are compelled to say: for such is the decision at once, of revelation and of reason. Do we then, in so saying, reject the *personality* of the Son and of the Spirit? By no means. In the true sense of that word, as used with reference to the Deity, in the only sense in which the word ought ever to be used in such connection, we do not reject it. In every other sense we do. As denoting a distinction existing eternally in the divine nature, a distinction not understood or capable of being comprehended fully by us, mysterious to us, as are many other things respecting Deity, a distinction however, which lays the foundation for a development in the history of our world, as Father, as Son, and as Spirit; in this sense the term personality may be employed conveniently in place and for want of some better term.

"And this is all that the Scriptures seem on the whole to convey respecting the matter, and all that we can admit consistently with the cardinal doctrine of the divine unity of essence or being.

"That many Trinitarians ancient and modern go farther than this, is to be conceded: they use the word person in reference to the Deity, in a much

broader sense, meaning by it much the same thing as when they apply it to three different men. That such writers are in reality, not so much Trinitarians as Tritheists, is also to be conceded. For what *can* constitute *three Gods*, if three divine existences, each possessing strict and proper individuality, three divine minds, each acting, feeling, and willing of itself, are not? What is personality in the ordinary and strict sense, more than this? In what sense, other than this, are any three men three persons?

"This method of stating the doctrine of the Trinity is particularly unfortunate, since it not only leads the mind that adopts it, into unnecessary confusion and even error, but by coming into direct and unavoidable collision with one of the plainest truths of revelation, the divine unity, it brings the doctrine itself into disrepute, and in many cases occasions its entire rejection. It is a sad fact, yet one with which he who is conversant with the history of doctrines in the church, is but too familiar, that in many cases the first sources of the error and essential heresy which have arisen in the world, to the no small detriment of truth and the human mind, are to be found in the injudicious and unreasonable statements and opinions of those who have held the very opposite extremes. Thus unquestionably has it been in the present instance. Not a few have been led to reject the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity *in toto*, as the only way of avoiding the really irreconcilable contradictions involved in the method of statement now under

consideration. And this state of things must continue, so long as they who hold the doctrine allow themselves to use terms in this loose and inaccurate manner: applying to the distinctions in the divine nature, the term person, in nearly or quite the *ordinary* sense of the word: speaking and thinking of the Father, Son and Spirit as if they were three distinct beings, who together constitute the Deity, who consult together, and enjoy each other's society and converse: thus virtually abandoning the doctrine of the simple undivided unity of the Godhead, and when pressed with the conflicting nature of these two things, taking refuge as a last resort behind the broad shield of mystery."

The same clear and admirable writer has shown how readily the argument of Dr. Bushnell, in "God in Christ," runs into Trinitarianism. His words are not entirely conclusive, for we can hardly be content to rest upon Christ as a faculty, or the Holy Spirit as a faculty, but the following passage foreshadows a distinction, that must be real even if we cannot wholly grasp it. He says,—

"But Dr. Bushnell (pp. 145, 146, and 177) describes the Logos as the faculty of self-expression in the Deity. We are ready to ask them, must not this faculty have existed eternally, and have pertained to the very nature of the Deity? Has the immutable One a faculty to-day which he had not yesterday, and for which until now there was no foundation in his nature? If in like manner we suppose the term

Holy Spirit to denote the divine faculty of operation on the human mind and heart, must not this also have existed eternally in the Deity, a faculty pertaining to his very nature? And are not these faculties distinct one from the other? Have we not then after all, an eternal distinction, existing in the divine nature itself, as the ground and foundation of those impersonations of the Deity which take place in time.

"To this distinction we may for convenience apply the term hypostasis, subsistence or person, if we please, provided we allow neither ourselves nor others to forget that when thus employed, the word is taken out of its ordinary sense, and used in a manner and for a purpose altogether extraordinary. Here is trinity: trinity in unity. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are God: and these three are one God. This we believe to be the doctrine of the Scriptures. That it is also the Calvinistic doctrine is unquestionable, though a matter of infinitely less importance."

In closing I will say that I stand on distinctively Trinitarian ground, and it is there it seems to me, that a minister must stand who would be effective in his ministry. The man of science, so long as he keeps himself to science, wants no Trinity, God revealed in creation answers for him. But the minister has to deal with the sinful heart of man, and God has brought himself into direct relations with the heart through Christ and the Holy Spirit. In my sermon on Justification by Faith, I have tried to show the mediatorial agency of Christ, and how the mani-

festation of God in him was essential to the conforming of man's broken image to the perfect image of his Creator. In the sermon on Regeneration I shall endeavor to indicate the work of God in the heart, the agency of the Holy Spirit. To be a Trinitarian involves these concessions: that Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," the ever living, the ever blessed: that the Holy Spirit is an abiding presence, nothing but the real, enduring power of God on the soul, "prompting it to will and to do after His own good pleasure:" that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, the incarnate Word: that God in his creative aspect, is neither above nor below his relations as Christ the Redeemer nor the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. If Jesus is to be but a man, or a gifted and unique messenger from God to man, and the Holy Spirit only those secondary influences which Providence places around us, I am not a Trinitarian and cannot be. If my religion consists in my own striving to keep my own resolutions, independent of any aid from God's Spirit, I am not a Trinitarian: I become one when I submit my soul plastic and humble, to the personal impress of God's Spirit. There are men and women among the Unitarians who are unwittingly Trinitarians: where they stand they are misunderstood, they ought to come out and be with those who acknowledge Father, Son and Holy Ghost, God one, yet Creator in the world, Redeemer in Christ and Sanctifier in the Spirit.

SERMON VI.

REGENERATION.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." — JOHN, 3: 3.

THE subject of this discourse will be Regeneration. But before I fairly enter upon the theme, let me detain you with a few prefatory remarks. We are, all of us, in danger of losing sight of great and precious truths, in the eagerness with which we may assail errors. By tithing mint and anise and cummin the Pharisees neglected the weighty matters of the law, justice, and mercy: and so in following sharply in the trail of superstitions, false opinions, and prejudices, we may forget to look around us and see through what a fair country we may be passing. Let me now, after this general remark, come right home to the Congregational Church of America, of which we are a part, and show the relative position of its Unitarian wing and its Trinitarian wing, judged by the remark just made. The Trinitarians, with hand and eye directly upon the Scriptures, have been in the peril of placing the letter above the spirit, but their careful search has made them ever watchful of the

great fundamental doctrines of the Word of God. The Unitarian division of the Congregational Church has ignored some parts of the Bible; the later Books of the New Testament, for example; has been in no danger of placing the letter above the spirit, but in its desire to dethrone many unnatural conceptions, it has lost sight for a time of some great and all precious doctrines. The present aspect of affairs of these two bodies is favorable to a remedying of both difficulties. In the Trinitarian wing, among the leading men, you find now a candor, a liberality, and a freedom from superstition and littlenesses, which is most encouraging; and among the Evangelical Unitarians, you find a strong tendency to take up the Bible again, and search into the deep things of faith. Since writing what I have now said, I find in the December number of Professor Huntington's Magazine the same thing, far better expressed, and I will quote his words in confirmation of my own. "Having the Unitarian movement in esteem for its early protests against intolerance; for its needed counterpoise to some prevailing extremes and extravagances in the forms and phraseology of doctrine; for its earnest application of Christian principles to common business and present duties; for its practical reform on a scholastic style of discourse; for the excellent spirit and ability of many of its adherents, and for its prompt espousal of the domestic humane enterprises of the modern church, we must reserve the right to suggest

that its efforts to correct errors had extensively run into the denial or oblivion of truths."

One of these truths, my friends, is that which forms the subject of our present thought, Regeneration. Although there has been a nominal upholding of it and its necessity among Unitarian Congregationalists, yet I must sadly, but at the same time honestly, confess that it has been quietly laid aside to make way for more familiar, every-day themes, or for new theological researches, or for more light and entertaining thoughts. How we can have done it in the face of that imperative Ye *must* be born again, is only a new tribute to the want of spiritual discernment among men, and a new token that we are of the earth, earthy. It shows us that a position of pure antagonism is the most dangerous one of all; that it not only paralyses our own efforts to diffuse our ideas, but that it dwarfs our sensibilities, and makes us blind to the great underlying matter that is common ground to all believers, of whatever name. It makes us keen-scented in hunting for other's errors, and closes our eyes upon our own home truths. It stifles that which is holiest within us, makes us change our unison of song with all Christian hearts into the battle cry of sect, and causes us to dwindle into a little marauding party, instead a part of the great conquering universal church.

And so we come to that subject in which we all, old and young, have such a direct and so great an interest, Regeneration. But the whole scope of Jesus'

conversation with Nicodemus is too broad for our thought this afternoon; we will not *try* to exhaust the subject. But following the order of Jesus' unfolding of Regeneration, we will think together; first, on the need of a new birth; and, secondly, what the new birth is, whereof Jesus speaks.

Firstly, then, what is man's need of a new birth?

It is uncalled-for to say at the outset that this conversation with Nicodemus was not intended to be personal. Like that with the woman of Samaria, it was for the world; it was for Nicodemus, and it was for Nicodemus' age, and not for his only, but for all the ages. Argument on this point is needless. There stands the first brief announcement, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Such words are for us as much as for him.

Convicted thus by Jesus' own words, let us, before we come to the further argument from Scripture, look a little within ourselves, and try and detect some portion of our own need of a regeneration. That we are sinful we know full well, for we have a conscience within that not for a day is silent, and we have eyes to see, and ears to hear the wicked things and the wicked words which are all around us. There is a word in common use to express this state of things, yet which does not, in the ear of the world, convey exactly the meaning which is wished; that word is—total depravity. But, so far as the facts of our sinful nature are concerned, I do not vary from the progressive Orthodoxy of the present day, for the popular

theology is far from being stationary, and is rapidly advancing to the plain statement of *facts*. We all have to stand upon this ground, and we all have to confess that we have natures whose proclivities are fearfully towards wrong doing, immediate gratification of our appetite, regardless of the future, towards warlike animosity, and that even the finer instincts of our nature, such as maternal affection, and the love of country, not unfrequently ripen into inordinate selfishness. That as beings capable of comprehending that a God of perfect purity, wisdom, and love, governs the universe, and guards us with unceasing care, we are unmindful of that care, ungrateful for that love. We have to confess that we inherit our nature, disposition, and proclivities from the generation to which we owe our being. On this ground, there is no wrangling. It is only till we reach the question whether we are accountable for the sin of the first pair, that the odious strife begins.

Let me, men, women, and children, appeal to your own consciousness in this matter. Are you not *conscious* of a will that runs counter to the will of God? Are your daily sins mere stumblings by the road, accidental lapses from right-doing, or are they the deliberate yielding to a power within which calls you from the way? Tell me ye sinning one, do you not listen daily to the syren voice of an enchantress in your soul, who sings sweet strains to you of the pleasure of enjoying sin for a season? Tell me truly, are all the voices which call you from right thinking,

right acting, right speaking, external to you, or do you hear some of them ringing in the caverns of your own soul? Own to yourself, and to your God whether you are not wayward, guilty, Godless.

Let me ask you one question more. Do you *love* your Maker? I do not ask Do you see traces of a Maker's hand in the works and wonders of the universe? I do not ask, Do you stand in awe of Him as revealed in the fearful elements, in storm and lightning and fire? I do not ask, Do you bow down in involuntary and constrained worship before the presence of One, fearful in majesty, glorious in holiness, doing wonders? but I ask, Do you love God with sure, fixed, felt love? Does your heart go out in sympathy towards him as revealed in Christ, with an affection like in kind, but superior in degree to that with which it yearns for your own child, your wife, your true, tried friend? If you thus feel, it is because God is in your heart by his own Holy Spirit, and your soul harmonizes with the great Soul of souls. But if you do not know that your spirit has has been opened to receive God into yourself, let me ask, how you bear afflictions; how you feel when others falsely revile you and unjustly mistrust you; how you look at calamities as they thicken in the distance; whether prayer leaps from your heart, as the bird soars aloft, with every fresh morning's light, with every new gift of God; whether you love the house of worship, and do not come hither with lagging step, and grieve when you are kept away; whether

the support of the means of grace is a begrudged tax; whether your Sunday school task is a work of true love; whether all the beatitudes of Christ come to you as great realities? Your natural state makes these all duties, painfully undertaken, grudgingly carried on. In your natural state, religion has but outward charms, and never comes near enough to you to breathe its sweet influence over you in your hours of toil. In your natural state, you may have times of aspiration, even as confined at the bottom of a deep, dark pit, you would turn your face upward to the day with how hearty aspirations; yes, in your natural state you may know and see the power of goodness, but yet not be willing to follow after it, just as a wayward boy at school may know how good a thing it is to have the approbation of his teacher, and yet not be willing to sacrifice his love of sport to gain it. 'Tis not that in our unregenerate state, we may not be perfect patterns of morality, train our families well and be true to every sense of honor; we may have all this, and yet not have that inner gift of holiness to the Lord; we may be utterly irreproachable in all our life, and yet there be absent from us one secret charm, the love of God; we may be, in the eye of all around us, spotless, and yet that secret link be wanting which binds the soul to God.

In the saddest of all conditions is the heart which does not know its own want, its own need of regeneration. Even Jesus Christ could not reach such, for they have nothing in common with him. Ah!

what a deep irony lies in these words, "I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Did he mean that those proud Pharisees, of whom he was speaking, needed no regeneration? No, no! He meant that till a soul feels its own sense of sin, his words are all movings of the air, idle sounds. But there are many such. There are some in the world who do not know their own natural state, who stand proud on the pavement of morality, and who do not feel that it needs religion to underlie *that*, lest in the hard frosts of temptation and trial, their pavement sink. But most men feel their woe. Most men, reading the life of a true Christian, see a spirit there which rebukes their own vainglory and their pride. Most men feel the need of something in their souls which nature has not given, which shall make them "eat and drink, and whatsoever they do, do it unto the Lord." We will not disturb the old question about infants and their natural state. To all intents and purposes, that question is settled, and I will not spend time in reconsidering settled facts. But the question which is for us, is the question which all can answer, who are old enough to understand this sermon: have we not fallen, are we not sinful, have we a fixed, sure, and felt love for God? The question which we put to our children in our Sunday School, comes to us for a response. Are men naturally disposed to love God? And the verse of our text answers it, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

You may ask me if I accept the doctrine of total depravity. I answer, I do not like, and do not use the term. It does not express what is meant, and it has too many significations, and is too much caricatured and too wrongly apprehended by the most of people to warrant much use. But if you ask me whether I accept the New England interpretation of that term, that we are born lacking in a distinctive love of God, I answer, I do receive it most fully. It is a fact of consciousness with me, that however moral a man may be, and however pure and true his instincts and aspirations, yet there is lacking in the natural man, a strong, definite love of God, a perceptible love, like that of parents for their offspring. It is this want which regeneration fills. It gives us that kindred element which unites us to God and makes us sympathize with him in the beating of his great heart. You may have a yearning for God, but it only proves your need of a regeneration; it by no means betokens your full communion with him. You may see something of God in Christ, but not in your natural state does Christ, the incarnate God, become all, that meets your dim conceptions of what God, the Absolute One, is.

The language of Scripture on this subject is decisive. It begins with the chapter in which our text is found, and shows the necessity of the new birth in such words as "Ye must be born again:" "Excepting a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." As an instance of Jesus' language on sinful-

ness as the nature of a man, I will only quote that verse of Mark — "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders." And let one verse from Romans determine the relation, which by nature we bear towards God: "The carnal mind is enmity against God." But why quote special passages? Is not the whole Gospel, the very coming of the Lord Jesus on earth, the token that man stands in a place of need; that he is not sufficient in himself: that without strength from above him, he is not competent to subdue the sin which is within him? Why did Jesus come, suffer and die, if man needs no regeneration? I cannot tell. Either we must convict the gospel of a great want of adaptation to the needs of man, and charge Jesus with leading a life without use and without effect, or we must confess our need of his grace and of his promised regeneration.

II. And so I come in the second place to inquire what is regeneration.

Regeneration is that renewing of the spirit of man which comes from the presence of God in the soul. It is the establishing of the Kingdom of God within us. It is the yielding of our minds to the cleansing and invigorating influences of the spirit of God. It is not any thing that we can see or hear; we know that there is a regeneration, because we feel it within ourselves, if we are converted to God, and because we can see the effects of it in the lives of Christians around us. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and

thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." The agent to produce this new birth in the soul is the Holy Spirit of God; he leaves to germinate in the human soul what is called in the New Testament, "the seed of the Kingdom." And the whole subject is condensed into this one word, we are weak and sinful: God gives his own spirit to us to make us good and strong.

There is a great deal of beauty in the symbolical language applied to this mystery of the regeneration. The word spirit signifies breath, air in motion, and God is represented as stealing upon the soul like the purifying wind of heaven. There are three kinds of baptism spoken of in the New Testament — the baptism by fire, the baptism by water, and the baptism by the air of heaven. They are all of them symbolical of the refining, purifying and strengthening influences of God received into the soul. The baptism by fire which John predicted, is a most vivid picture of God in the soul, making quick the conscience, and like the assayer's furnace, refining the character and purging away the dross. The baptism by water, of which Jesus speaks in this very conversation with Nicodemus, is not the washing in river water, although that is the construction which the Christian world has always set upon it, but it is a symbol of the purifying power of God in the soul, to cleanse away all the guilt; and the baptism in the spirit, becomes, when we remember that the word translated spirit,

means air in motion, a most fit symbol of that power of God to pass through the soul to search and try it, even as the searching wind divides wheat from chaff, even as the wind braces and invigorates the system of man and gives us tone. Forgetting that the use of the words water and spirit, which is air or breath, is purely symbolical, the Christian world has always been misinterpreting that beautifully typical verse, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The whole of the Catholic and a large part of the Protestant Church to-day trembles when any one dies, if he has not been sprinkled or dipped in water, forgetting that the verse was symbolical, purely symbolical, and that the water and the spirit, or moving air, mentioned within it, are types of the cleansing and searching power of God in the human soul.

That a Christian man has God acting on his heart, not only the Scriptures teach by most frequent and most emphatic statements, but the whole experience of a regenerate man assures him that a new power is in his soul. Jesus speaks of the Comforter that should come and dwell within his followers, after his departure: the Holy Spirit is pronounced to be "shed abroad" in the hearts of Christians; and again and again is the presence of God in the human soul, referred to as one of the primal facts of a Christian experience. And when you look at a man who is a real Christian, you see that he does not draw his happiness from the same source with other men: he has

foresworn bad habits, bad associates, bad desires, not by the power of good resolutions, but by virtue of a new power implanted in his heart. A true Christian is not always saying, I will not be intoxicated to-day, I will not go into bad company to-day, I will offer my prayers to-day and read my Bible: he has no need of new resolves on these things, he has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit; there is a new power in his heart, which like an intuition says, "shun evil: learn to do well." When a Christian man who, at the time of his regeneration, gave up his vices without a struggle, and easily goes on in the path of virtue, asks himself, what is this new power within me, that seems to be leading me up and up, that draws my soul to heavenly meditations, that is subduing the power of sin, — what is this new Power whose working I behold with wonder? — when a Christian man asks himself these questions and then sits down with his New Testament as the dictionary to define it, and proclaims its source, he very soon finds that the Holy Spirit of God has come and made his abode with him, and has adopted him a younger brother in the great family of the sons of God.

Of that vexed subject, instantaneous regeneration, I will say not a word. Any obscurity connected with it, has come from blending regeneration with sanctification. Plainly there must be a moment when the Divine Spirit steals over the soul of a convicted sinner: that is the regeneration; that is the *seed* of the Kingdom: the sanctification must follow: the little

grain of mustard seed must grow till it becomes a a great, fair, fruit-bearing tree. Regeneration begins the work, sanctification continues and completes it: but the world overlooks this: calls the whole work of grace regeneration, and insists with truth indeed, that a full and perfect character cannot be matured in a day. But the regeneration, the seed of the Kingdom is planted in some quiet minute, and I would to God some might be scattered in your hearts to-day.

My friends, I cannot close this sermon without urging upon you this subject, trying to impress you with your need of renewing power, and without asking you to open your hearts to the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit. Do not stand content with your moral life and your good resolutions; do not tarry till you have given your heart to your God and received his spirit within you. You want to know how. Turn to your New Testament and read of the publican and the Pharisee who went up to the Temple to pray; and while the Pharisee mumbled his self-righteous words, the publican cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And he it was who went down justified. There must be some one in this congregation who feels his need of more power and more goodness than he has; will you not repeat the publican's prayer till you find that God's mercy is so large that he will not only pardon your offences, but he will give his own spirit to you, to be the sweetest treasure that you can carry around with you. We read that he is most willing to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

May you, my friends, enter into the fulness of the revelation, that what makes a man good and keeps him good, and silences temptation, is God in the human soul; a doctrine so exalted, so rich, so assured by the teachings of Jesus and his early followers, that I accept it as one of the choicest disclosures ever offered to man, as one of the crowning gifts of life.

SERMON VII.

FORGIVENESS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." — ROMANS, 3: 23, 24, 25.

THAT great theme which meets us this afternoon almost forbids speculation, as it asserts its practical importance and value to the soul. It is no less than the forgiveness of our sins. To what I shall now say I candidly ask your attention, yea, your sympathy; I entreat you to forget all names, distinctions, theologizings, to plant your foot with me this hour on the Word of God, and listen reverently to its teachings on Forgiveness. Think only, my friends, that we are sinners, arrayed against God; out of harmony with his spirit, and daily transgressing his law; think that what we want in such a sad plight is the forgiveness of our heavenly Father. And yet while we thus feel, this growing curiosity which is within us, is demanding to know how it is done; on what conditions our want is met and satisfied. It is indeed a rational cu-

riosity. I envy not the man his religion who takes it and uses it unthinkingly. While we feel, we have to think; and even now, while we know and confess our sin, and crave forgiveness, the question rises unbidden, but we will not repress it, on what conditions can that forgiveness be granted?

For, my friends, away at the bottom of our answers lies a state of mind in regard to this matter which is either right or wrong; and although to the ear of one not much practised in the words of theology there be not much to contend for in the *doctrine* of forgiveness, yet to him who knows the secrets of the heart, there are differences of moment, which He will not overlook. What those differences are, I will not now state, and perhaps may not in the sermon; for it is my undertaking now, not to address mainly your mind, but to reach the heart and life.

But since it is my accustomed way of working, which I cannot forego without violence to myself, to let the current of feeling and religious obligation flow through and out of a channel of doctrine, let me begin by laying down and briefly illustrating two or three truths, axioms we may say, of religious science.

We begin with the assertion that there is no law without penalty. This is self-evident; it admits of illustration, but no proof. You may not conceive of law as law, without penalty attached. Divest it of penalty and it becomes counsel, advice, monition. It can exist without penalty neither in the family, the school, the State, nor the government of God.

You may supplant it by love, and thus make obedience the spontaneous expression of the soul's affection, and this all true obedience should be, whether displayed to man or to God; but law, which is quite another thing, has a face of authority and ever holds the rod of chastisement in its hand.

This leads us to note that law, broken in the family or school, is in part sanctioned and upheld by the remorse of the child and in part by the rod; in the State it is sanctioned in part by remorse and in part by the restraint of a prison; in the realm of God, it is in great part sanctioned and upheld as law by the remorse of the soul. Take away these punishments, and if law, not love, is the controlling agency in home, school, State, world, the sanctions of law are gone; the word is shorn of its dignity and character and weight; enfeebled and unrobed, it becomes the sport and the neglect of men.

And now my friends, suffer me to ask you, in view of what you see around you, how law is held in the eyes of men, as sustained in family, school, State, as well as in the government of God. In well-regulated families, law is sustained even by the penalty of the rod; in schools of excellence and order, law is sustained and sanctioned even by the same penalty; in the State the law pointing to the prison gates, is respected and feared, and those who break the statutes of the State, skulk in the dark, and live in obscure hiding-places. But *God's* law of right and wrong is openly broken and without apology; and

when some law of God is copied upon the statute books of the State or city, men fear the penalty that comes from man more than that which comes from the court of God. I have been recently told of a distinguished civilian of this State who holds that God's law carries its own sanctions, but plausible as the position is, the great fact that confronts us is, that men break it with more fearlessness than they do any other law, and scorn its penalties. It takes a long time for a man to feel so much at home within a prison's walls that he enjoys the confinement and would not be free, but every day we see some souls whose consciences have become so seared and whose whole spiritual nature has become so callous that they no longer feel the teeth of remorse. To the young soul, to the youth newly exposed to temptation, the broken law brings penalty keen and smarting; but even to such it is not often sharp enough to hold them back from future sins; but to men, strong, active, and engaged with a hundred thoughts, the smart of the wounded conscience is soon forgotten. So while the great truth stands before us in its own self-evidence, that law is not law without penalty, another fact greets us, that the law of God is not sustained in the world by sanctions and penalties which make it so fearful, great, and authoritive that men obey it with uniform promptness or constancy.

If this is a fact, and is there one here who doubts it? we are compelled to ask two questions; viz., is what we call God's law, really *law* or only counsel,

fatherly advice, or has it other sanctions than the remorse of the sinning soul? The first of these questions we all dismiss as unworthy a moment's thought. Assuredly God lays upon us the mandates of *law* and Christ comes to us and issues anew the sweeping, all-comprehensive law of God. Has it then, other sanctions than those which are slighted by men the world over, coming from the wounded conscience and the soul's remorse? I answer, that so surely as these do not sufficiently sustain the law of God, and do not give it such sanction that men at once and implicitly obey it, we must look elsewhere to see it sustained and sanctioned. And certainly, here we are sinning every day, and here is a world around us in the same bad way, and here is all history, not flecked with sin, but blotted, and fouled, and stained through and through, and God's law set sternly against it, and God's punishment, the pain and anguish of the soul retrieving as it may, the honor of His law, and yet all unavailing. Nay, here is this startling fact, that so long as the soul shall endure, it shall carry the marks of sin and shall show the tooth prints of its remorse, and yet not even this is check enough on man's sinfulness. Nay, all kinds of physical ills, external privations, disease, some kinds of loathsome death, come in as the penalties of God's broken law, and yet these, present and seen, do not sustain and sanction it in a way to compel obedience. We must look elsewhere, in heaven or on earth, to God or to man, for some availing sanction of the divine laws.

And thus, by this short and direct path, we are led to our Redeemer; thus we are forewarned of one of the great objects of his mission.

And how, we are constrained to ask, does he meet this want and sanction the law? I answer, first, by the obedience of his life: second, by the submission of his death. The widening scope of this sermon forbids that I give but a few words to each.

If a General commands that his army march through snow and on frozen ground, thirty miles a day, for two weeks, subsisting on cold provision, and a somewhat scanty allowance even of that, while he remains behind, enjoying all comforts, intending to journey leisurely along, what stimulus to obedience does he give them? But if he marches at their head, shares their discomforts, and eats the dry biscuit with them, what a spur is it, and what a sanction his obedience gives to his own command. True, he is not compelled to do it; no more is Christ in his similar relations; but he does it, and his very obedience is a spur to us and a sanction to the law which raises it up and ennobles it in our eyes.

And yet again, his obedience *even unto death* gives it those sanctions which most exalt it and make it honorable. I will not phrase it that Jesus died *to* express God's abhorrence of sin, but that in dying, he did express in the fullest way, that abhorrence. His crucifixion was the most many-faced event of his career; it had many great functions in the work of man's redemption. But incidentally it expressed,

and that intensely, God's abhorrence of sin, and thus it is the great sanction of the divine law; and whenever you find a strong man looking at the cross with tears, witnessing the unquestioned agony of the trial, the garden and the death, and in view of Jesus' passion, feeling all the burden of conviction, you may read a memorial of God's law, sanctioned by the death of Christ. It must indeed be that Jesus should die, to exhibit immortality and assert the future life by his resurrection; but why a malefactor's death, outside the city gates? why amid jeers and revilings, curses and taunts? I answer that his obedience *unto death* might be a sanction of the dignity and glory of the Law of God. And when that Law comes to you, my friends, in its supremacy, it will come, not armed in the power of the stings of conscience, nor of a threatened hell of remorse, nor of the soul's death nor of the body's woes, but it will come sanctioned by the obedience of Christ, in his life, and even unto death.

I know that in these days, the word vicarious has an old-fashioned sound, and we think it outgrown and left behind, but does it not well hint at the quality of that love which draws near to us to exalt God's law and make it honorable? What pathos, what power in this depth of love, which draws near to us in Christ, endures all the privations of life, obeys the Divine law in all its requirements, and submits even to the bitter death of shame. There is power in that, and he who shall, with uncovered head, look upon

this rare obedience, will feel, that in Jesus' life, the law of God was sanctified in such significance and invested with such supremacy, that man shall always know his Creator's abhorrence of sin.

This is the modern expression of the atonement: and I confess it seems to me just and true; and while in those older types of expiation, substitution, propitiation and satisfaction, there is a profound reality; yet in this statement of Christ's life of obedience and death of submission, the unstudied expression of God's regard for law and his aborrence of sin, is what is to me the great truth of the atonement.

And now I go on to inquire, how can it be, and on what conditions, God will grant us forgivness of our sins against a law thus sanctioned and sustained? Can he grant it, is it safe for him to grant it, on the ground of our penitence alone, or will that open the door for laxness of any kind? It is on this point alone that my views have undergone any considerable modification since I came first into this pulpit. They may have slightly developed in other directions, but it is in the direction of the thought of the remainder of this sermon that they have been changed.

Atonement is the reconciliation of a holy, loving God and a sinful, hating soul; the bringing them together on the common ground of holiness. It implies forgiveness, for never can the soul be reconciled with its God so long as it is unforgiven. God is always ready to forgive; man is not always ready to

be forgiven. Yea, I may go farther, and say that God is always yearning for the sinner's love, and the return of the Prodigal, repentant, to his Father's home. It is the Prodigal, who is alienated, and who eats his husks in a far country, with his face turned away as though he would go farther.

But so far as concerns forgiveness, the question for us in the most practical form which I can give it, is, does the parable of the Prodigal Son convey the whole doctrine, or does my text hint at a sequel which Jesus did not state? You have commonly been taught that had Jesus not meant that that parable should include the whole doctrine of forgiveness he would have given some hint of the omission. I grant the force of the argument, but I ask in what parable did he ever exhaust the truth; what were his parables but outline sketchings, to be filled in and made complete by the later revelations which followed his ascension, and had their inauguration on the day of Pentecost? And how, save in this view, will you meet my text? "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." There is something in these words that goes beyond the parable of the Prodigal Son, which does in no sense contradict

that parable, but which simply indicates on what condition it would be safe for God freely to forgive a repentant soul. "Through faith in his blood," is the central clause, and the basis of forgiveness. The cross, the blood of Christ, it was for those who wrote after the crucifixion to uphold and to display in their efficacy. They are alluded to in the gospels, but the cross, which is the burden of the epistles, does not stand out with all its radiance in the books whose closing chapters only it fills. We do not seek to draw from the epistles any statement that the forgiveness of sins is reluctantly given, but we cannot be blind to such passages as that of the text, where the key-word seems to be the blood of Christ.

I do not know how I can better express my thoughts on this whole theme than by asking you what is to be the penalty of your sins, if you are a forgiven offender. You answer, My sin has now no penalty, for that is cancelled by my pardon. The penalty cancelled by your pardon! You may be reconciled to God, and in full communion with him, but how is the penalty of your sin cancelled? No, you may be forgiven, but the penalty is borne by Jesus Christ.* Here we have another glimpse of that

* An objection has been raised by some that an innocent being cannot bear the penalty of the guilty without gross injustice. Not, we would ask, if voluntarily undergone? If the great end of punishment is retribution, the innocent may *not* suffer for the guilty. But if it is — and thus it indeed is — that the great end is remedial, in the government of God and

many faced crucifixion. Now we are nearer him than before; now he is bearing our sins; now he is wounded for our transgressions. This is the central mystery and the chief joy of religion. To come before the cross in this aspect, demands that you put the shoes off your feet, for it is holy ground. True I am only asserting in a different form that same doctrine of Jesus' obedience unto death the highest sanction of God's law, but put in this phrase, I hold it up nearer to the heart. When it is asserted that the expressing God's regard for law and his abhorrence of sin is a great point in the mission of Christ, you receive it; indeed, it appears true; but it does not seem a truth warm with life. But when it is turned before you, and you see its other side, and discover that the equivalent expression is that Jesus bore sorrows, and woes, and agony equivalent to the penalty of all your sins, you have your Redeemer before you in a phase which must win the human heart. The other seems more like a truth of philosophy, this like the power of religion. And yet the two views are of the same scene, and both of them come to this needed result, sustaining the dignity and supremacy of the law of God. Dismiss the penalties of that broken law, and without an equivalent for them, it is no longer law, and that equivalent is

man, then the innocent may bear the pain of the guilty, for the great end is not individual chastisement, but the upholding of law in its purity and power. Penalty undergone does this, whether borne directly or vicariously.

the suffering of Jesus Christ. Or, which is just as bad, hold that law up as it seems to be regarded in the eyes of men, as lax and not stringent, and with slight penalties, and it is no longer the law of God, for He will ordain no such easy-going system.

The great problem of this whole question is forcibly stated in the verse following the text, "That God may be *just* and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." I trust that in the brief paragraphs of this sermon, for I may not be so full as I would gladly be, I have outlined my thoughts so that it may be apprehended. It rests upon this basis, that God's law, like all law, is not law without penalty; that as the forgivness of sin dispenses with penalty, the majesty and supremacy of the law cannot be sustained without some agency equivalent to the penalty due. That this want is met in the obedience unto death of Christ, which we may regard from the stand-point of intellect as the expression of God's regard for law and abhorrence of sin equivalent to the penalty of our punishment, or from the stand-point of feeling, as Satisfaction, Expiation, Propitiation, Substitution, or any phrase drawn from the Jewish economy, or from courts of justice, or from the phrase of trade. The great *thing* which is wanted is "faith in his blood" to use Paul's own words. With all those arguments respecting the precise amount of agony endured by Christ, I have nothing to do. It is enough for me to know that as Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, he endured enough to sustain the

dignity and glory of God's law; more than this we do not need to know.

And the great issue of the sermon is the spirit with which you are to pray for forgiveness. You are to come to God with this feeling uppermost in your heart, that it is not through your own deserts that you ask to have the penalty of your sins remitted, but only through the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are to remember that law would demand your full punishment, it is through the grace of of Christ that you go free. Many a judge sentences poor felons to death, while his heart yearns towards them, and he wishes that the majesty of law could be sustained, and yet they have pardon. But with the judge it may not be, and he has to pronounce the impressive death sentence. But what a boon it is to us, sinning men, women and children, that God, who far more yearns toward us, and must equally sustain the sacredness of law, has sent his only begotten Son into the world "to be the propitiation" for our sins "through faith in his blood." Thus is the problem solved; "God is just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

I have noticed that a great many men, who are vile sinners, are unwilling to ask for forgiveness of God on the ground of their own repentance alone. They feel that it is more than they can expect: that they are so bad that God cannot forgive them. Nor can you rid them of their thought by telling them that God is infinite in mercy and will freely forgive them.

But tell them of Christ: tell them that in his passion he made satisfaction for their sin, and while they may not see the philosophy which underlies it, nor know that what is wanted, is that the majesty of law be sustained, they will accept your words and will ask for that pardon which is none the less free, because it is given through faith in the blood of Christ.*

I would gladly end here and not try your patience, but before closing, I must say one word to prevent the possibility of being misunderstood. I must disavow, as distinctly as possible, any adopting of an idea which is now outgrown and discarded, universally I believe, that God is turned away from the world, and that Jesus loves men and sheds his blood that God may regard with pity his own children. Many people hold this up as standard Orthodoxy, and then aim all their logic and sarcasm at the effete, and I be-

* I ask the reader to pause and recall the last hours of hardened sinners, of whom he has read, and note their unwillingness to accept a free forgiveness. A refutation in itself of the theory that dispenses with penalty in the free forgiveness of God. For he has planted such sure instincts of right in the soul, that however abandoned, it gravitates to the conviction that God cannot sustain the majesty of his law, without some one bears the penalty of sin. The poor soul hungers after forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father, but will not accept it till assured that Jesus has come to bear the pains and suffer the penalty. Here as in so many other points, the Unitarian theory fails in its practical working to exhibit the power which flows spontaneously from the truth.

lieve wholly discarded, dogma. Nor do I hold that God has to be reconciled to man by any other reconciliation than that which immediately follows man's embracing his Father and longing for His love. I plant myself on this necessity, the sustaining the majesty of the Divine Law. A forgiveness independent of the obedience unto death of Christ, does not seem to me to sustain the sacredness of the divine law, since it dispenses with penalty, and yet provides no equivalent.

My friends, as I have felt that I could not conscientiously close my ministry here without uttering the thought of this sermon and expressing these convictions, which for three months have been maturing, so can I not close this sermon without asking you who know that you are sinners to come willingly before the throne of God. There may be in this congregation, some one, perhaps more, who are saddened by their daily ill deserts, who mourn over their past; who are, in a terribly true sense, convicted of sin. I cannot close my argument without applying its result to you. You may be burdened with the memory of some signal deed of guilt, some long series of wicked transactions. I ask you to come to God and implore his grace in those old words, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And while you ask, whether in that or in any form, remember that your confidence in being heard is in the blood of Christ. Remember that without his sanctioning the majesty of the law, you must have paid for your ill deserts even to the last

farthing. And while you shall pray, and hang the efficacy of your petition on Christ your Redeemer, you shall find that your love and joy in him shall increase, and he who suffered for you, shall enter deeper into your affections: that even your own sins shall draw you more near to the life of your Saviour.

Oh the glorious redemption through Christ! From whatever side I regard it, and in whatever light, it seems to me the most glorious system of agencies ever devised. As it has come before us in the Incarnation, in the two sermons on Free will, in the last Sunday's sermon on Justification by faith, in our meditation to-day, it seems most glorious, most complete, most adapted to every want of the soul. And this last most expressly, for shapely and complete as a system of religion may be the test, is its adaptation to the wants of the soul. But so impressed am I with this, that I shall ever count it my highest joy to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and try to win souls to the Christian life. Though we may not all see with the same glasses to-day, yet may it be ours to stand one day around the throne of our God, and chant his praises and rejoice in his love. This shall be my prayer: let it be yours. With sins forgiven through faith in Christ, may we ever be united in the love of God, and the grace of Jesus and the communion of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

GOD, CHRIST, MAN, FROM TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

"Ye are not under the law but under grace." — ROM. 6 : 14.

A DISTINGUISHING feature of Christianity, my friends, is, that it makes religion one of the working forces of life. Other systems leave it merely a *worship*, a method of devotion or adoration. Christianity takes it and projects it into the spirit so deeply that it takes hold of, and regulates and adorns the life. Thus Christianity opens the way for the *sermon* whenever men meet to pray, and while the prayers and hymns make use of it for the ends of devotion, the sermon turns it into its working channel and sets it in motion against the wheels of daily life. And in this aspect the minister comes ever to regard it, and whatever agencies or modes of presentation he finds best adapted to this, he seizes upon and tries to make bear upon the life of those under his charge. But in all these working aspects Christianity is ever opening before his eyes in two relations, two as concerns God, two as concerns man. How this is done, and what phases are disclosed in this double relation I proceed

to unfold. He has first to settle this question: Is Christianity a goad to stimulate the motives, powers, and excellencies of man's heart, whose worst fault is, that they are weak, or is it a power coming from without and entering in; healing old sores, and giving a life and a force which the heart could never generate? Reduce this down to the simplest phrase, and it is, Is Christianity to urge to self-culture or to lead on regeneration? Shall man do the work or shall God? Are the works which are the result of good resolutions, or those which are the product of faith, the ones which are of account in the reckonings of Heaven? When the minister comes to preach, he has to have these questions all answered within himself, and then lecture to his people on the moralities of life, show them they are good, but liable to err; but that being good, they can and they ought to ascend to the heights of moral glory and religious worth; or he must remind them that they are more than weak, that they are sinful, that they have wandered from the orbit of true living, and it is not in them to return; they must be caught by God's hand, and brought back step by step to him. Among the people to whom he preaches, one man will define conversion thus: "I make a good resolution, and I keep it," and another, when he quotes Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Speaking a moment personally, let me say that I have spent between two and three years in the ministry, trying to persuade men to self-culture; I hope to spend the rest of my

days in persuading them to partake of a renewing of their natures by One who is higher than they, a regeneration by the Spirit of God.

Now as Christ embodies Christianity, the question hinging directly upon this confronts us? Who was he? What think ye of him? And the answer comes back at once, if the end of Christianity is to lead to self-culture, Christ needs to be, and must be, to meet the case, perfected humanity; he must represent the ultimate limit to which the human faculties may go, sinless, spotless, because a perfect man; his mission to beckon us on to his own heights of exaltation, and to display to us in his life the action of a perfect human being. And if the answer be, that Christianity is a scheme of agencies by which God may easily and naturally enter into the human heart, and cleanse it and invigorate it by his own life, than we have to regard Jesus Christ as the Temple in which God makes his special seat, the Word whereby God holds converse with the world, "God manifest in the flesh" to use the Scripture phrase. For, plainly, God to be received by us with warmth, and at once, must come within the circle of our sympathies, and when he looks forth, is spoken forth, is acted forth in the life of a man, his moral attributes are in our view, and the heart which is ready to receive him turns with love and with restful confidence to his Christ. But these two views grow logically out of the aspect which Christianity has to us; self-culture demands a perfected humanity, regeneration, incar-

nated Divinity. And when men place themselves for a time on an intermediate stand-point, its want of adaptation to human needs prevents its hearty adoption, and they speedily settle into a tendency which finds its true issue in one or the other of these views of Christ's nature and mission. A careful survey of all the facts will, I am sure, show you that what the nature of the case would make us expect, finds itself revealed in fact.

Advance one step further, and see what relation God sustains to us, looked at in this twofold way, that which we have heretofore regarded as Law and Love, Works and Faith, Jesus Christ the perfected man, and Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh.—If we have highest duty and joy to obey Law, to cultivate ourselves and of ourselves to do good works, and need no Saviour save one who shall show us how to live and beckon us on to the heights of perfected manhood, then God becomes to us the object of devotion, trust, awe, but nothing more. But if on the other hand, we abandon the self-culture theory, pass into the realms where Love is the moving power, and Faith the source of pious deeds; where resolutions are carried into effect by the power of prayer, and Jesus Christ is the exponent of Divinity in the eyes of men, having the glorious ends of his mission the conforming of man's broken image to the perfect image of God, then does the Divine Being become more than an object of awe, devotion, trust, yea of inspiration, and the prayer is filled with meaning

when we ask for His Spirit "to work within us to will and to do after His own good pleasure." It is a good thing for the soul to adore God and to praise him, to thank him for mercies past and to pray to him for bounties to come, but it needs a fuller heart and more lofty expression to thank him for the gift of His Spirit to men, to thank him for stealing into the hearts of men and doing for them what they could not do for themselves, cleanse away their sin and make them take their chief delight in those duties which tend to God's glory and the good of the human race.

Thus there seems to be a logical sequence in all these things. Whichever view you take of the nature of man, ought, according to this, to find its perfect fulfilment in the work of becoming a Christian, in the post which Jesus Christ is to fill in the scheme, and what God or God's Spirit. If you begin with the Pelagian theory of human nature, which assumes that man comes into the world pure, with no bias to virtue or vice, then outward circumstances, such as family government, education, the laws of Christianity and the influence of Christ's example do the whole, and he glides along through the path, hard or easy as you please to call it, hoping that he shall get to heaven at last. A Saviour in the deepest sense is not wanted there, a regeneration is not wanted there, the Cross, with its highest meaning is not wanted there. Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is not wanted there, the Holy Spirit to

inspire man's heart is not wanted there, and God is worshipped indeed in awe and trust, but God, the soul's Guest and Comforter in the Spirit, and God so beautiful in Christ, is absent; this view does not give him as he is craved by the heart.

If on the other hand, you begin with the Augustinian theory of human nature, man inheriting a diseased body and a diseased soul, the course onward is equally direct, to the need of some power higher and purer than man to remould his spirit, cleanse away its baseness and make him a new creature. Regeneration does this; Jesus Christ, divinity in humanity, brings God visibly within the range of human sympathies, and God becomes by his Spirit in man's heart and by his manifestation in Christ the object of the soul's purest, deepest affection.

These are the logical issues of thought, and whenever you find a statement of belief which embodies a part of one of these systems and a part of the other, you can see how illogical and insequent the arrangement is. The self-culture theory plainly has no need of a Saviour; in that, man rescues himself; "I make a good resolution and I keep it," is its expression, and when in connection with that theory a Saviour and his cross are spoken of, the incongruity is apparent to all. The self-culture theory has no need of a Holy Ghost; such a term is unnecessary and irrelevant when it is employed in its statements; that term has its real significance to the soul that demands help outside of, and above, itself, and

does not work and toil in its own strength alone. These two trains of statement really lie wholly without each other, and in time they will assert their independence of each other in a clear and logical mind. Men will settle down at last on clear convictions that the soul is to *be* saved, and how; or that the soul is to gather up its own strength, and how. It is vain to think that men will talk long of a Saviour where there is nothing to be saved which cannot save itself, or will discuss an atonement when there is no one to be reconciled, neither God to man, nor man to God, for if man is naturally holy and not averse from God, he needs no reconciliation.

There is no need for me to say a word to-day which shall sound harshly on the ears of the most sensitive. Now that I am not bound by any sectarian name, I have no one's faith to be accountable for save my own. I shall therefore speak as plainly as possible to-day, but neither my theme nor the occasion of the hour calls for any thing of aspersion, any thing but words of love and charity.

For over two years of my ministry, my friends, I looked at Christianity from the point of self-culture; esteeming man essentially noble and pure; born pure; his sin not the outworking of a sinful nature, but the bending of a flexile nature to over-strong temptation. To preach the morals of life, the proprieties of worship, was my work; to call upon men to make high resolves, pledge themselves to sacrificing and heroic lives, my Sunday's task. That my

duty was to search for souls I had no conception, and well do I remember how like a hypocrite's cant that expression sounded when I heard it in the charge given to an Orthodox minister. During those years I had no joy in my labor, I felt that perhaps a minister who wrote finished sermons and read them well was doing something to improve the public taste, and that it was a good thing to call people together on the Sabbath. Although I believed that Jesus was a singular being who had the power to work miracles, this great power of his mission to reveal God and bring him within the range of human sympathies, did not dawn upon me: and the Holy Spirit I supposed to be a general expression denoting many things, but chiefly those providences of trial and bereavement, in which God speaks to our spirits. The opening of John's gospel was a complete enigma to me: the epistles, with their frequent allusions to the cross and sacrifice of Christ, I made little account of, deeming them so full of Jewish ideas that a Christian could get little profit from them. Of course my ministry had no fruit, and little by little I threw my interests into the cause of schools and education, thinking that there I might do better service. I had kind friends, hospitable and open-hearted, who were always at church half a day, in good weather, but somehow we did not any of us get along religiously very fast. The church was without deacons, and almost without male members; the Sunday school was generally without a superintendent, and badly off for teachers,

worse off for parental restraint; and though there were some true souls there, the whole organization, religiously, worked badly; and looking around me, and finding substantially the same results elsewhere, the inference was irresistible that there was something wrong in the system. Were we in fact on New Testament ground? Were we using the facts and forces of Christianity? That was the question that was to be solved. Were we *true* to the New Testament as our only creed? That was what I sought to know. One thing was almost certain, that a man who should be true to the theology of the New Testament must be a vital, earnest Christian. But I thought that I preached the theology of the New Testament; I thought that as a minister I was true to no creed save the Bible, and hence the enigma became darker and darker. Could the trouble be in the fact that I did not claim to understand the opening of John? Could the trouble be that I discarded the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, as all overrun with Jewish ideas? I thought not, and ascribed it to a tendency to make the church a hall for lyceum lectures, and fell back for the whole solution of the difficulty on Goethe's aphorism that thought widens while it lames.

I have been requested to make some public statement of the gradual change of my views on questions of theology, and as I have never done so, I will avail myself of this occasion to do so, not parading any

matters of the heart, but stating those things which relate especially to convictions of the mind.

While trying to train up a congregation on the self-culture theory, using Christianity as it appears in relation to man not needing a Saviour, and making a complete religious failure, the thought which I first unfolded to you in August, and again in December last, of Christ the Manifestation of God, its religious uses and relations, and the unlocking which it gives to John's Gospel, flashed over my mind, and that sermon was written. Its thought was at variance with all my previous ideas, and on going into my pulpit to preach the sermon, I fully expected to be called upon within a week to resign the pulpit. Such was not the case however; it was repeated in two weeks, and was tacitly endorsed by the leading members of the congregation. Meantime the thought lay in my mind for months, and its relation to man, a sinner, needing to be brought face to face and heart to heart with God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, and the meaning of Niebuhr's line began to dawn upon me: "Kein andrer Gott als der Gott der Bibel, der Hertz zu Hertz ist." No other God than the God of the Bible, who is *heart to heart.* Jesus' mission as the revealer of this God provoked inquiry as to man's need of such a revelation, and this all led logically to that course of religious statement which was presented early in this sermon, which begins with man a sinner, needing a Saviour, needing regeneration, needing reconciliation

with the Father, the co-operation of the Spirit of God. Then came the great revival of last year, throwing every man back upon himself, to ask how his account stood with God. I shared in a nation's thoughtfulness, but of the thought and feelings induced in that season of prayer and meditation and Christian union, I will not speak. Enough to say, that during the time which elapsed between accepting your invitation to fill this place and my coming, three months, I hoped that in a deeper sense than ever before I was a Christian. But so far as the Unitarian name was concerned, I had not the slightest intention of throwing it off, for my former parish had not rejected my view of Christ's divine nature, and I argued that what would be current with them would be current everywhere. I trusted to what I *then* supposed to be the spirit of Unitarianism,—the widest toleration in religious belief. So far as Unitarianism was concerned, I only made this resolution, that I would settle over no Unitarian Church, where there was not religious life enough to sustain at least one weekly meeting for conference and prayer. My hopes of finding such in New England were small enough certainly, but your letter of invitation, expressing an interest in the great work of reviving, then going on, and appealing to me to hasten hither to throw in my word and prayers with those of the good Christians of Marietta, was an assurance to me that here I should find co-laborers.

Before coming hither I had, for weeks, been considering this question, Why are those who accept the

Trinity so earnest and devoted, and why were the Trinitarian churches, among whom I labored, so vital, while mine, with many of the leading citizens of the place in the congregation, as a religious organization, was so torpid? I looked over, and turned over, that word Trinity. True, thought I, there are a good many who think that that word implies three Gods, and some books are printed which convey the same, but does not the power of the thing lie back of that polytheistic conception, in the idea of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each of those terms denoting God in his relations to man; Father, as Creator and Sustainer; Son, as Word, Revealer, Mediator; Holy Ghost, as Regenerator, Sanctifier? And does not, then, that phrase, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all briefly comprehended in the one word Trinity, meet the whole religious wants of men? I had to answer this in the affirmative, and in August last I preached this doctrine.

I feel now, more strongly even than I did then, how much the phrase, there are three persons in the Godhead, obscures the real glory and significance of the true Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I should set it forth to-day as I did then, and as I found in December, that Jacob Abbott had done in the Corner Stone, under the name manifestations of God rather than persons; for men who are not professed theologians will always be slow to learn that the word person is not to be used, when applied to the Trinity, in its common sense, designating an individual, but in a

unique and entirely peculiar sense, which nothing drives men to but the poverty of language.

The *real meaning* of the Trinity, however much it may have been distorted in consequence of the imperfect language in which the doctrine is generally stated, the real meaning is not that there are three Gods, — and it is the real meaning, and not men's false idea, which we want to deal with, while we exercise our whole power to do away the tritheism which abounds about us — I repeat it, it is the *real* meaning that we have to do with, and for one, I wish to stand in the Trinitarian church and say, the real Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and whoever believes that those are three separate beings is a Tritheist, and not a Trinitarian. To grant that the too prevalent Tritheism in the world is real Trinitarianism, is a fatal concession; for without entering on any discussion of what lies locked up in the secrets of God's inner nature, it is enough to know that the real Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that these terms have their chief value to us, in that they briefly indicate how men are saved through the Son, and renewed by the Spirit.

Then looking at God in that twofold way, which was unfolded in the opening of this sermon, you have the view which is virtual deism, God displayed by his handiwork, the God of natural theology alone; Jesus Christ, perfected humanity; the Holy Spirit, all good influences around us — and you have this view besides, God shown as Creator in his handiwork, God in

his moral perfections displayed in Jesus, and God's spirit, his own inspiring presence in the human heart. By what names these two positions are characterized is a matter of small importance; it is the theory involved which is the only fact of value. The words Unitarian and Trinitarian have their highest significance in determining the relation of a man not only to the question of Jesus' divine or human nature, but to the whole problem of *man's* nature, and the problem of his salvation. Undoubtedly it is a sad thing that so many people think of God as three beings, misled by the word "person" in their statement of belief; but, my friends, there is a great power back of that error, and that is, that in recognizing the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the direct agency of God in regeneration, they are in the way to salvation through the Son, and by the Spirit. Changing the word person to manifestation does not do away with this great *fact*, it only brings it out in fuller relief, and the word Trinity is shorn of the bewilderment which the word "person" has entailed upon it in these latter days, and becomes a brief expression of the whole scheme of man's reconciliation to God, and his being purified and ennobled.

And the accepting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with all that grows out of them, has been the legitimate source of that development of views which has been noted by all in regular attendance on my ministry here. In logical sequence from that expression has been the substitution of preaching recogniz-

ing man's alienation from a spiritual God, his inability to reconcile himself, the need of regeneration and forgiveness through Christ, and sanctification through the Spirit, in place of the theory of self-culture. The whole was virtually reached when the doctrine of the true divinity of Christ was reached; the development of a system of theology on the basis of Christ's divinity was merely a question of time. In a series of sermons on Regeneration, Belief in Christ, the Attractions of the Cross, the Christian solution of Free Will, Justification by Faith, and the Atonement, that system has been unfolded, my only guide being the Bible and my own heart. Yet I have been happy to find, sometimes weeks subsequently to the preaching of a doctrinal sermon, that there are books in the world wherein the same results had been registered, only showing that in all minds the same premises are the sure precursors of the same results.

The basis of organization of this church is so worded as hardly to show whether it was composed in interest of the self-culture theory or in that of salvation through Christ. It might be received, perhaps, by an evangelical Christian, with slight reservations, as true so far as it goes; and yet it would be thought to express well the views of many Unitarians. So far as that basis is concerned, we could stand on it together to-day, only exercising the right of a private interpretation of its various clauses. So far as it is a protest against virtual Tritheism, it must command the assent of intelligent Christians gener-

ally, its phrases would admit of being construed as in recognition of the Supreme divinity of Christ, and of the personal action of the Holy Spirit on the heart; and even the expressions which deal with man's nature admit, without forcing, of an Orthodox interpretation.

Hearing, then, on all sides, as late as the middle of December, that it was the unanimous wish of this society that I should become its settled pastor, and receiving tokens of kindness, both in word and act, which convinced me of your sincerity; I was almost ready to make up my mind to settle in your midst. Only two things stood in the way, and held me back from giving a word of encouragement to the repeated intimations of a desire that I should become the settled minister of this parish. One was, would the parish sustain my course if I should refuse to become responsible for any sectarian name, or any system of doctrine saving that which should be my own, simply taking the name Trinitarian in company with the millions of the church, Catholic and Protestant? That is, would a Unitarian Church, recognizing nominally the widest difference of opinion, live up to that recognition, by allowing a Trinitarian minister in its pulpit? And would this church refuse to stand antagonistic to the evangelical church, but in as friendly relations to that church as possible, hoping to give and take, instead of resist, and call, hard names. This was the second question. To solve these two questions, I asked you not to become Trinitarians, but re-

fuse to be *Unitarians;* to stand simply as Christians or as Congregationalists, and strike hands in friendly amity with the great church of Christendom. I handed in my resignation with the opening year, also which you declined to receive, but now accept one month before the close of my second engagement. The Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, years ago, went through the same history, but with different results. The minister, Rev. James H. Perkins, was sustained in full, his resignation was never accepted; the Society voted to abandon a ground founded in opposition to Trinitarianism, and re-baptized themselves as Congregational Christians. But Rev. Mr. Perkins was never after cordially sustained; he found that voting and cheerfully acting were very different things, and he sunk into a morbid melancholy in consequence of his failure, and many of you know his sad fate. In organizing a similar movement here, I too, have failed; since the first of January you have voted that my views were such as this church was founded to sustain, but three months later I resign this pulpit into your hands, not disheartened or discouraged, but hoping that I shall be spared to do some service for the Lord in another vineyard.

I will dwell no longer on personal matters, and will only say in closing this narrative of experience, that my course here has been, as I look back upon it, a straightforward course of natural development from the premises of the second, third, and fourth sermons here, on a United Church Universal, the Divinity of

Christ, and the Threefold Manifestation of God, which I then called a Trinity of Manifestations, down to the present hour. When I preached these in August I called myself a Unitarian, and the sermons were pronounced true; when I repeated two of them in December, and the substance of the other Thanksgiving morning, shall I say they were not called false? At any rate, while I bore the name Unitarian, my doctrine was approved; to-day I preach substantially the same doctrine, and tender my resignation. It must have a bad look to the world; it certainly looks as though a name was better than the truth.

You tell me now that my coming here has put you back. That does not depend on me, but on whether you have the truth; if you have the truth, it is not in the power of a man who has lived only a quarter of a century to put you back. But if my coming here should be a disadvantage to this society, it will arise from no desire of mine that it should be so, for if I know my heart, I have placed myself here under the tutelage of God, and left his Spirit to guide me. I have made a sacrifice on the altar of my convictions of duty, for the social and literary privileges of this city were becoming ever dearer to me, and there are those here whom I have loved with a brother's love. You have the means to supply my place with an able man, and to keep the pulpit in the regular line of Unitarian succession. I drift away loosely upon the world. But whenever I shall think of the sacrifice which I have made here, I shall feel approved of God in try-

ing to follow the plain path of duty, for I shall not have to chide myself with any deception in coming here as a Unitarian, nor for any want of plainness and consistency in my preaching, nor for any invidious plottings against the peace and welfare of this Society.

One wholesome, encouraging fact for us all, and I close. *Truth* is eternal, invincible. Where truth is, there will be life and there victory. In Cæsar's legions, where the Roman eagle glistened above the crested helmets, there was always the onslaught of victory. When Constantine went forth, a few centuries later, wherever the cross beckoned on the men, there was the same result wrought out, and it led to certain triumph. Later still, in England's times, wherever on the battle field the dark armor of the Black Prince waved it was the precursor of success and glory. On our battle field moves the figure of Truth. Eagle, Cross, Black Prince, call her as you will, wherever she moves is victory. Remember that, remember that. The name of the church you belong to is but the guinea stamp. If you have the truth with you, and in you, is the decisive question. That is what is to seal the destiny of this church; nothing else can do it. An unfortunate name may put you back, but if you seek the talisman that will lead to success, search for the truth, for that will win the day, and crown its owner with eternal glory.